KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OBSERVATION COACHING TOOL

About the Tool

The KSDE Quality Instruction Observation Coaching Tool illustrates the most important elements of quality instruction in any K-12 classroom as articulated in the **Statewide Vision for Quality Instruction**. It provides a common language to articulate what quality instruction looks like in practice for each focus area:



The tool consists of the following components:

- **Focus Areas:** Core components, or elements, of quality instruction as defined by the vision
- **Indicators:** Brief descriptions of observable teacher actions that are most significant for the focus area (indicators are not exhaustive)
- **Look-Fors:** Student and teacher actions that can provide evidence for the indicator

This tool can be used in a variety of ways to support coaching, peer observations, and professional learning. ***Please note that it is non-evaluative and should not be used for formal teacher evaluation. For recommended uses,*** refer to the Observation Coaching Tools Guidance document.

Best Practices

Observations should be no shorter than 10 minutes, though a minimum of **15-20 minutes** is recommended. Note that you may not observe evidence for all indicators in a single observation. Consider observing at different parts of the lesson to gather information across indicators. Many look-fors describe what students are doing or thinking; these should only be marked when there is evidence that a clear majority of students (over 70%) are participating in the identified action.

Use the note-taking templates to make note of the lesson's topic and objectives, target standard(s), number of students and curricular materials being used (if any). Take low-inference notes to reduce the influence of assumptions, opinions, and judgment on your ratings.

Content-Specific Tools

For additional guidance on specific content areas, utilize the relevant Vision for Quality Instruction and corresponding Observation Coaching Tool. Content-specific observation coaching tools are aligned to the focus areas of content's instructional vision.

For more information, contact Jennifer Hamlet, Assistant Director (Career, Standards and Assessment Services) at jennifer.hamlet@ksde.gov.

Focus 1: Teachers with High Expectations

1A. The teacher communicates clear expectations for transitions, routines and procedures.

1B. The teacher paces the lesson to maximize the time students spend in critical thinking and meaning-making.

1C. The teacher models taking intellectual risks and productively struggling through rigorous questions & tasks.

1D. The teacher demonstrates belief in students' ability by giving encouraging feedback to build independence.

Focus 2: Standards-Aligned Tasks & Materials

2A. The teacher uses instructional materials that are high-quality and aligned to the content/rigor of Kansas standards.

2B. The teacher poses questions and tasks that encourage critical thinking and are well-sequenced to meet the depth of grade-level standards.

2C. The teacher provides temporary scaffolds *as needed* to support students with accessing grade-level questions & tasks without lowering the bar.

Focus 3: Deep Student Engagement in Learning

3A. The teacher presents questions and tasks that encourage students to take on the majority of the work.

3B. The teacher cultivates reasoning and meaning making by allowing students to productively struggle.

3C. The teacher creates opportunities for dialogue, where students talk about each other's thinking.

3D. The teacher prompts students to explain their thinking about the content of the lesson using evidence.

Focus 4: Intentional & Cohesive Instruction

4A. The teacher communicates clear learning goals aligned to grade-level standards.

4B. The teacher connects new learning to prior learning and knowledge.

4C. The teacher provides timely, accurate feedback that helps students refine their understanding.

Focus 5: Data-Driven Instruction

5A. The teacher deliberately checks for understanding using a variety of informal and formal assessments.

5B. The teacher uses data to adapt the lesson or provide differentiated supports to respond to misconceptions.

LESSON CONTEXT			
Teacher:	**Date/Time:**	**Grade/Subj:**	**# of Students:**
Materials: ☐ Teacher-Created ☐ Adopted (name below)	**Learning Target:**	**Standard(s) & Text(s):**	

Focus 1: TEACHERS WITH HIGH EXPECTATIONS	
Indicator	**Look Fors**
1A. The teacher communicates clear expectations for transitions, routines and procedures.	☐ *Students execute transitions, routines and procedures efficiently with little direction from the teacher.*
1B. The teacher paces the lesson to maximize the time students spend in critical thinking and meaning-making.	☐ *Students are engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish.*
1C. The teacher models taking intellectual risks and productively struggling through rigorous questions & tasks.	☐ *Students take intellectual risks, attempting questions and tasks even when they are unsure of the answer.*
1D. The teacher demonstrates belief in students' ability by giving encouraging feedback to build independence.	☐ *Students engage with grade-level work with appropriate support from the teacher.*
Direct Observation Notes	

Focus 2. STANDARDS-ALIGNED TASKS & MATERIALS	
Indicator	**Look Fors**
2A. The teacher uses instructional materials that are high-quality and aligned to the content/rigor of Kansas standards.	☐ *Students engage with high-quality instructional materials aligned to Kansas standards.*
2B. The teacher poses questions and tasks that encourage critical thinking and are well-sequenced to meet the depth of grade-level standards.	☐ *Students attempt questions and tasks that sequentially build their understanding and mastery of grade-level content.*
2C. The teacher provides temporary scaffolds as needed to support students with accessing grade-level questions & tasks without lowering the bar.	☐ *Students grapple with grade-level tasks and materials, even when the teacher provides scaffolds.*
Direct Observation Notes	

Focus 3. DEEP STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING	
Indicator	**Look Fors**
3A. The teacher presents questions and tasks that encourage students to take on the majority of the work.	☐ *Students do the majority of the work of the lesson.*
3B. The teacher cultivates reasoning and meaning making by allowing students to productively struggle.	☐ *Students persevere through difficulty, owning the complex thinking even when teachers provide support.*
3C. The teacher creates opportunities for dialogue, where students talk about each other's thinking.	☐ *Students talk and ask questions about each other's thinking to clarify or improve their understanding.*
3D. The teacher prompts students to explain their thinking about the content of the lesson using evidence.	☐ *Students share their thinking beyond just stating answers and provide evidence to support their ideas.*
Direct Observation Notes	

Focus 4. INTENTIONAL & COHESIVE INSTRUCTION	
Indicator	**Look Fors**
4A. The teacher communicates clear learning goals aligned to grade-level standards.	☐ *Students can explain the purpose and relevance of the lesson.*
4B. The teacher connects new learning to prior learning and knowledge.	☐ *Students use prior learning and knowledge to deepen their understanding of a concept or topic.*
4C. The teacher provides timely, accurate feedback that helps students refine their understanding.	☐ *Students know when they are on or off track toward mastery of grade-level content.*
Direct Observation Notes	

Focus 5. DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION

Indicator	Look Fors
5A. The teacher deliberately checks for understanding using a variety of informal and formal assessments.	☐ *Students frequently demonstrate their proficiency in a variety of ways (oral, written, etc.).*
5B. The teacher uses data to adapt the lesson or provide differentiated supports to respond to misconceptions.	☐ *Students refine or shift their thinking as understanding deepens with feedback, scaffolds, or extensions.*

Direct Observation Notes