# CES Classroom Observation Tool[1]

In order to address the special needs of the Host Teacher and to make the observers experience rich and meaningful, we recommend having all participants engage in a pre- and post-observation discussion. This tool, adapted from PEBC, provides a guiding protocol for such deep conversations to occur.

## Pre-observation Protocol

### I. Welcome and Building Connections (5 minutes)
- Teacher introductions
- "What are you looking forward to today?" or "What do you hope to get out of our time together?"

### II. Purposes for classroom observations (3 minutes)
Classroom observations offer a contextualized learning opportunity for every teacher. They provide support for teacher learning through observation, peer discourse, examination of student work and application of new practices. Several of the purposes are:
- To analyze/study teaching strategies that correlate to student learning outcomes
- To analyze student work as means of assessing student learning
- To build our collective efficacy
- To build our disposition as a researcher and classroom observer

### III. Overview from Teacher to be observed (10 minutes)
- The Host Teacher provides participants with background on the course, including brief description of course outline, learning outcomes for students, and the core instructional practices he/she has been working on this year.
- He/she will also discuss what student work will be examined to assess if students have reached the learning outcomes.
- The Teacher states the focus of his/her inquiry related to the benchmark classroom practice(s).

### IV. Determine indicators (15 minutes)
- Participants as a group brainstorm what this practice would look like and feel like in a classroom. They identify evidence that would indicate presence or absence of the Benchmark Classroom Practice.
- They decide what they will collect during the observation, e.g. student conversation, teacher talk, student conference, student actions, use of time, use of materials, use of space, etc.
- In the observation, participants are encouraged to use the observation tool to note evidence, notes, and indicate the progress toward the transformational descriptors.

### V. Norms for observation: Being a Researcher in the Classroom (2 minutes)
- This includes a discussion of the observers' participation in the class. For example, can observers sit or interact with students, and when; can they move around the room and when?

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[1] Adapted from the Peer Learning Lab Project, PEBC, 2006

# Post-observation Protocol

I. **Reflection and written synthesize of observation data (2 minutes)**
Classroom Observers review their notes and record their thinking about what they saw and what they heard during the observation.

II. **Share observational data (10 minutes) (Teacher Moves and Evidence of Student Learning)**
In several whip arounds, participants share their findings, using the following prompts: "I saw/noticed…" and "I heard…" Responses should be free of opinion or suggestion.

III. **Focus on student work (40-45 minutes)**
**Round 1: Looking at student work.** The Host Teacher provides participants samples of student work that he/she will be using to assess student learning during the observed lesson and to plan for next instructional steps. The participants take a few moments to analyze the work. Next, on sticky notes, participants record the strengths, gaps and surprises that came to mind as they analyzed the work. These notes are placed directly on the work for the Host Teacher to review.
**Round 2: Reflecting on student work**. Observers take a moment to reflect on what they noticed in the student work and may choose to answer the following questions in their notebooks: What did looking at this body of student work make me think? What questions did this activity raise for me? If I were the teacher, what might my next steps be? Meanwhile, the Host Teacher is reviewing participant feedback placed on sticky notes.
**Round 3: Implications for instructional next steps.** After taking into consideration participants' observations of student work and their "noticings" from the observation, the Lab Host will answer, "What does this feedback make me think?", "What might implications for my teaching practice be?", and "What else do I need to know?"

IV. **Questions and Answers (10-15 minutes) (Thoughts and Wonderings)**
At this point, participants can respond to the student work and/or share their thoughts/wonderings. The following conversation prompts are encouraged in the discussion.

> _Prompts for Conversation:_
> _"This makes me think…"_
> _"Now, I am wondering…"_
> _"Now, I realize…"_
> _"I want to know more about…"_
> _"I am confused about…"_
> _"If____, then____…"_
> _"Hmmm…I will think more about ____, and make_____adjustments."_
> _"Could you tell me more about _____finding or _____query?"_
> _"I want to know more about_____. Does anyone have any ideas or suggestions?"_
> _"Say more? Say why?"_

V. **Identification of practices that promote student learning (5 minutes)**
Participants will identify what practices each individual will take away and try in their instructional practice.

VI. **Reflection upon the observation process (2 minutes)**
1) How has this peer observation helped increase our knowledge about student learning and core instructional practices?
2) How might this learning experience (the pre-observation, observation, and the post-observation) be improve?

| | **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy** | ***CES Common Principles*** <br> ▪ **Goals apply to all students** <br> ▪ **Personalization** <br> ▪ **A tone of decency and trust** <br> ▪ **Democracy and equity** |
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| Coalition of Essential Schools | | |

**Benchmark Description:** Culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates fundamental cultures offers full, equitable access to education for students from all cultures and prepares students to live in a pluralistic society. **Culturally responsive teaching** is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

## SCHOOL VISIT/CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL

**Date:** **Class Observed:**

***Transforming*:** Student thinking and work reflects a depth of the knowledge, skills, and values needed to live in a pluralistic society.
***Developing*:** Practice is reflected in teacher planning and instruction.
***Early*:** Learning about and planning for the practice has become important to the teaching staff.

| TRANSFORMING DESCRIPTOR | PROGRESS | EVIDENCE | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Culturally responsive teaching **uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them**; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students. | ☐ Transforming <br> ☐ Developing <br> ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teaching **acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages (language, history, traditions) of different racial, ethnic, class, religious, and gender groups,** both as legacies that affect students' dispositions, attitudes, and approaches to learning and as worthy content to be taught in the formal curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching builds on and expands students' social capital. It provides students with examples of difference, such as building intergenerational relationships. | ☐ Transforming <br> ☐ Developing <br> ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teaching **builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school** experiences, between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities, and between school experiences and youth culture. | ☐ Transforming <br> ☐ Developing <br> ☐ Early | | |

| TRANSFORMING DESCRIPTOR | PROGRESS | EVIDENCE | NOTES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Specific culturally responsive pedagogical practices include an **anti-bias pedagogy**, positive perspectives on parents and families of culturally and linguistically diverse students, culturally mediated instruction that teaches students to know and praise their own and each other's cultural heritage and historic contributions, communicates high expectations, and uses a **wide variety of active instructional strategies** that are connected to different learning styles. Culturally responsive teaching **incorporates multicultural information, resources, and materials** in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional, and political learning by **using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.** Culturally responsive teachers realize not only the importance of academic achievement but also that of **maintaining of cultural identity and heritage**. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teaching creates **curriculum** that invites students to explore complex identities and consider racial group experiences, analyzes opportunity denial, power, privilege and social stratification, represents a diverse range of people thoroughly and complexly, and discusses history accurately and thoroughly. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |
| The school community uses best practices in **language acquisition** to support academic development and support in both English and native languages. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teaching is **transformative** in that it involves helping students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions and implement their decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |
| Culturally responsive teaching guides students in understanding that no single version of "the truth" is total and permanent. It **does not solely prescribe mainstream ways of knowing and making meaning**. Instead, it presents multiple perspectives on a situation or idea and supports student understanding of them all. Culturally responsive teaching is a movement against and beyond boundaries of traditional ways of knowing. It is that movement that makes education the practice of freedom. | ☐ Transforming ☐ Developing ☐ Early | | |