



Peer Observation Journal / Guide

As a mentor perhaps you could consider creating an observation journal. This is a journal for you and your new teacher and each time you observe the classroom, write down your observations. You could use the *Domain Observation Guides* to better focus your observation, considering such things such as what was working in the lesson, what needed improvement, whether the lesson addressed the appropriate standards, whether students are on task. You might also make observations about particular students and offer ideas for ways to help.

When you leave the classroom, leave the journal for the new teacher – providing immediate feedback. At the front of each journal, write a note encouraging him/her to use the journal to respond to you or to address other issues or concerns.

The journal then becomes a running history of the year. The next time you enter his/her classroom, you can look back at the journal to see if there is a need to follow-up on your suggestions. Similarly, the new teacher can track his/her own progress. Having all of the communication in one book can be a very positive experience and great method for building a relationship.

Communication is a key to developing a relationship and will allow the new teacher to flourish with your guidance:

- Build trust
- Promote an internal focus of control
- Encourage self-assessment
- Develop beginning teacher autonomy
- Foster risk-taking
- Listen, clarify what you hear by asking questions and paraphrase what you've heard to show that you understand and care
- Show enthusiasm / interest in the new teachers work and thinking
- Follow suggestions with questions that invite the new teachers to imagine how the idea might work in his/her classroom





Observation Guide:

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

Can he/she explain correctly and clearly key concepts in the discipline under study?

Does he/she respond adequately to student questions about the content?

Can he/she describe students accurately, i.e. does he/she know them well?

Is he/she familiar with students' out-of-school interests, hobbies, and knowledge?

Are instructional plans appropriate to the developmental level of students, i.e. not too hard nor too easy?

Can he/she talk about how a lesson relates to a student prior knowledge?

Are instructional outcomes clear to students? Do the goals relate to state or district standards?

Does he/she know about and use alternate resources that are available in the school and district to enhance learning outcomes? (Lesson plans; evidence of in-classroom use of same)

Does he/she design lessons that are engaging—as seen in lesson plans, materials used, and in classroom results of engaged students? Does it encourage thinking and not just rote memory?

Can he/she share how the prior lesson feeds into the current one? And how the next one will build in a meaningful way?

Can he/she share examples of both summative and formative assessment? Is there a plan to use the results?





Peer Observation Guide:

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Are relationships characterized by respect and thoughtfulness?

Does he/she demonstrate individual and personal interest in students' lives outside the classroom?

Do students feel safe, as evidenced by their willingness to take risks?

Are high expectations evident for all learners?

Does he/she (verbally and nonverbally) communicate the expectation that students will successfully learn the content? Do they acknowledge that what is being learned is important?

Are students engaged in learning?

Is student behavior orderly and consistent with classroom rules?

Are procedures clearly taught? Are there explicit consequences for failure to follow classroom rules? Are they administered consistently, fairly, and respectfully?

Is the physical space safe and free of obvious dangers?

Is it attractive, with resources that facilitate learning?

Does the room arrangement facilitate students listening to one another and working together as appropriate?





Peer Observation Guide:

Domain 3: Instruction

Are clear directions and explanations given students?
Are they audible and legible?

Are written directions clear? Are the purposes for instruction clear to the student? Are they engaging?

Does he/she question promote thinking or are they more aimed at recitation rather than discussion?

Do assignments challenge thinking, problem solving or non-routine thinking?

Does he/she employ various methods of grouping students? Does the grouping reflect what the teacher is trying to accomplish?

Are a wide range of instructional materials used? Are they suitable for the student and applicable to the instructional outcome?

Do lessons have a defined structure? Are students able to track their part in the process?

Are the lessons paced appropriately for the students? Are they paced suitably for the content?

Was there an observable use of student assessment? Was the teacher aware of students who were confused during the lesson? How did they respond?





Peer Observation Guide:

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

Does the teacher reflect on his/her own instructional practice? That is, after a lesson, does he/she consider if the goals were met, what might be done better accomplish the goals, or how to modify it to help students be more fully and genuinely engaged in the learning process?

Are records maintained?

Are families well-informed and engaged when appropriate?

Does he/she participate in school and district initiatives, taking a role as a professional to help them improve?

Does he/she have a growth plan?

Does he/she get appropriately involved in department, team, or grade-level meetings for the betterment of the students?

Does he/she look for ways to provide services which are not currently offered, advocating for special-needs students?

