

Building an Effective Teacher Evaluation Process

Using PK-3 Teach Lead Grow as a Guide for Improving Teacher Performance



As you know, classroom evaluations are more than just a “one and done” observation and meeting between a leader and a teacher. Evaluations should be about giving teachers the guidance and tools they can refer to for long-term success.

In this resource, we’ll dive into how principals can develop more deliberate and actionable evaluation processes that assess educators’ performances all the way from planning, teaching, and applying and reflecting on what they’ve learned.

Remember, your evaluation process should not be formulaic. It should be structured, but flexible enough to address the unique challenges each of your teachers and students face. Here, we’ve provided a guide you can follow for observing, assessing, and providing feedback to your teachers using PK-3 Teach Lead Grow and the Danielson Framework for Teaching as your go-to resources.

Observing Teaching Practices

If your local district process allows for flexibility in collecting data based on a yearly or biannual summative evaluation process, you can organize the components of your teacher observations like this:

Informal Observations

Unannounced, 15-20 minutes

These informal observations are often good to do at the beginning of the school year after the teacher and students have had time to establish and develop shared routines. These informal observations should include written, descriptive feedback from the observation and a short, collaborative [Reflection Conversation](#) about the learning environment and student ownership of learning routines.

Formal Observations

Announced, 45+ minutes

In these formal observations, you should observe the whole group in a classroom, small groups, and individual time to get the best possible sense of instruction and student learning. Pay particular attention to how the teacher gives feedback to students and makes formative assessments of their learning progress. This formal observation should also include a [Planning](#) and [Reflection Conversation](#), detailed on the next page.



Planning Conversation

It is important that [this conversation](#) includes a collaborative discussion on the who, what, why, and how of the classroom learning process:



Who: background and needs of students

What: essential learning priorities

Why: connections to student interests, background, and past learning

How: success criteria for learning indicators and priority activities

The teacher and evaluator will also want to determine specific “Look-n-Listen For”s (guide detailed on page 6) from the students and even specific questions to ask students to guide the evaluator’s data collection process.



You can watch videos on PK-3 Teach Lead Grow that highlight these conversations [here](#).

Reflection Conversation

This conversation is organized through a collaborative discussion that uses the observation data, student artifacts and teacher’s reflections to:

- Celebrate what is supporting student learning
- Consider different concentrations for additional learning progress
- Determine next steps to be taken by the teacher
- Identify aligned resources that could support teaching and student learning priorities



You can watch videos on PK-3 Teach Lead Grow that highlight these conversations [here](#).

Analyzing Data Following Observations

After collecting evidence during observations and prior to your post-observation conference, use this checklist to “clean your data.” Implement the three R’s: Remain, Review, and Reflect.

Remain in the observation mode to “clean the data.”

Consider...

- How might I include additional information or explanations provided by the teacher in their self-reflection regarding the lesson to enhance this data set?

Review the data to ensure it reflects evidence and not opinion.

Consider...

- Have I recorded only facts?
- Have I included any opinion (in the guise of fact)?
- Is my evidence relevant to the 2013 Framework for Teaching or [2017 Framework for Teaching Clusters](#)
- Whenever possible, have I used quantified words like “few,” “some,” and “most”?
- Have I used quotation marks when quoting a teacher or student? Is it clear in my notes what is a direct quote and what is a paraphrase or observation?
- Does my selection of evidence indicate any personal or professional preferences?

Reflect and sort the evidence to align it with the instructional framework.

Consider...

- After reviewing the data that I have for specific components or clusters, what is my quick “instinct” for the level of performance?
- What does the data show about the teaching/learning process, including both the teacher’s and students’ roles and responsibilities in the learning process?
- Have I considered possible celebrations and areas of concentration based on the evidence?

Giving Feedback to Teachers

Simply put, teachers should always receive feedback through [collaborative conversations](#). Because teaching is a thinking person's job, conversations about teaching must be about cognition, and include questions like:



How did a teacher decide to do X, rather than Y?

Has he or she ever tried Y? What happened?

Are there any circumstances or any purposes for which Y would be a better choice than X?

For a teacher to benefit from feedback, teachers and evaluators should collaboratively focus on common indicators of teaching and student learning practice and use guiding questions to think deeply about different aspects of their professional practice. Examples of these questions are highlighted in our Look-n-Listen For Guide on page 6.



Cluster-Aligned Questions

Danielson Framework for Teaching “Look-n-Listen For” Indicators

Clarity of Instructional Purpose and Accuracy of Content Questions

- To what extent does the teacher demonstrate depth of important content knowledge and conduct the class with a clear and ambitious purpose, reflective of the standards for the discipline and appropriate to the students’ levels of knowledge and skill?
- To what degree are the elements of a lesson (the sequence of topics, instructional strategies, and materials and resources) well designed and executed, and aligned with the purpose of the lesson? To what extent are they designed to engage students in high-level learning in the discipline?
- To what extent did the teacher make adaptations to the lesson?
- To what extent did the teacher use formative assessment to check for student understanding?

Indicators

- Clarity of instructional outcomes, reflecting not only knowledge of content and of CCSS or other high-level standards and practices, but also suitability for the students in the class (1a, 1b, 1c)
- Instructional outcomes reflecting the range of important types of content represented in the discipline: for example, factual and procedural knowledge, skills of reasoning and group work, analysis (1c)
- Planned resources and activities aligned to the instructional purpose (1d, 1e)
- Planned assessments are aligned to the instructional purpose (1f)
- Use of formative assessments are directly aligned to instructional goals (1f)
- Expectations for learning, accuracy of content, clarity of explanations, and use of academic language (3a)
- Activities and assignments, questions and student discussion, all aligned to the instructional purpose (3b, 3c)

Safe, Respectful, Supportive, and Challenging Learning Environment Questions

- To what extent do the interactions between teacher and students, and among students, demonstrate genuine caring and a safe, respectful, supportive, and also challenging learning environment? Do teachers convey high expectations for student learning and encourage hard work and perseverance?
- Is the environment safe for risk-taking? Do students take pride in their work and demonstrate a commitment to mastering challenging content?

Indicators

- Language of caring and respect between teacher and students and among students
- Teacher’s awareness of students’ interests in and beyond school
- High levels of cognitive energy
- A safe environment for student risk-taking
- High expectations for students’ capabilities for learning
- Productive student engagement in small group work
- Students persevere, even in the face of challenges

Cluster-Aligned Questions	Danielson Framework for Teaching "Look-n-Listen For" Indicators
<p>Classroom Management Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the classroom well run and organized? Are classroom routines and procedures clear and carried out efficiently by both teacher and students with little loss of instructional time? To what extent do students themselves take an active role in their smooth operation? • Are directions for activities clearly explained so there is no confusion? • Do students not only understand and comply with standards of conduct but also play an active part in setting the tone for maintaining those standards? • How does the physical environment support the learning activities? 	<p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient procedures for non-instructional activities: taking roll, distributing and collecting materials, making transitions, etc. • Clear guidelines for student work when it is unsupervised, e.g., in small groups • Evidence of clear standards of conduct, understood by the students, monitored by the teacher, corrected successfully (when necessary) by teacher or students, or both • Physical environment supportive of learning activities • Productive contribution to the class by volunteers and paraprofessionals
<p>Student Intellectual Engagement Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are students intellectually engaged in a classroom of high intellectual energy? What is the nature of what students are doing? • Are they being challenged to think and make connections through both the instructional activities and the questions explored? • Do the teacher's explanations of content correctly model academic language and invite intellectual work by students? Are students asked to explain their thinking, to construct logical arguments citing evidence, and to question the thinking of others? • Are the instructional strategies that are used by the teacher suitable to the discipline, and to what extent do they promote student agency in the learning of challenging content? 	<p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The content is seen as worthwhile, important, and interesting • Content is presented in a manner that engages students in thinking and reasoning • Learning tasks require students to engage intellectually, to think; some may involve productive struggle • Questions/discussions involve higher-order cognitive activity; students have time to develop their ideas and productive habits of mind • The lesson has a recognizable structure, with time for reflection and closure • Students explain their thinking and question the thinking of others

Cluster-Aligned Questions	Danielson Framework for Teaching "Look-n-Listen For" Indicators
<p>Successful Learning by All Students Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the teacher ensure learning by all students? Does the teacher monitor student understanding through specifically designed questions or instructional techniques? • To what extent do students monitor their own learning and provide respectful feedback to classmates? • Does the teacher make modifications in presentations or learning activities where necessary, taking into account the degree of student learning? • Has he or she sought out other resources (including parents or guardians) to support students' learning? • In reflection, is the teacher aware of the success of the lesson in reaching students? 	<p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both summative and formative assessments, aligned to learning outcomes, have been planned (1f) • The teacher monitors student learning during the lesson (individuals and groups) through a variety of means (3d) • Students receive specific feedback on their work from the teacher, the activities themselves, or other students (3d) • If necessary, the teacher modifies the lesson to ensure that students "get it," drawing on other resources as needed (1d, 3e) • In reflection, the teacher assumes responsibility for student learning (4a) • The teacher's records permit detailed analysis of learning by individuals and groups of students (4b) • The teacher enlists, as appropriate, the engagement of families in student learning (4c)
<p>Professionalism Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the teacher engage with the professional community (within the school and beyond) and demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional learning? • Does the teacher collaborate productively with colleagues and contribute to the life of the school? • Does the teacher engage in professional learning and take a leadership role in the school to promote the welfare of students? 	<p>Indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with colleagues for joint planning, and school/district and community initiatives • Active engagement in workshops, courses, and activities to improve practice • Integrity and honesty in dealing with colleagues and parents on behalf of students

With more effective and engaging evaluation processes, principals can guide their teachers -- novice to veteran -- to even greater success in their classrooms.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

[Click here to watch teacher planning conversation videos now to help guide your evaluation process.](#)



[Click here to watch teacher professionalism conversation videos now to help guide your evaluation process.](#)



[Click here to watch teacher reflection conversation videos now to help guide your evaluation process.](#)

