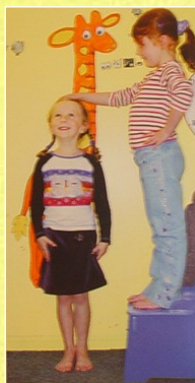


The School Observation Measure

Observer's Manual



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INTRODUCTION

THE SCHOOL OBSERVATION MEASURE



This manual provides information and procedures needed to conduct classroom observations with the *School Observation Measure (SOM®)*. It begins with an overview of the *SOM* and how it is used for multi-class and targeted observations. The manual then provides general guidelines for conducting school-based observations. This is followed with descriptions and operational definitions of school and classroom variables that comprise the *School Observation Measure (SOM®)*. Identifying and coding these variables in a consistent manner is essential for reporting reliable and valid data.

Receiving formal training of the use of *SOM®*

Requesting approval for visiting a school

Completing Classroom Observation Notes for *SOM®*

Completing a *SOM®* Data Summary Form

The skilled observer is able to improve the accuracy, authenticity, and reliability of observations through intensive training and rigorous preparation.

1

School Observation Measure Overview

The School Observation Measure (SOM) (Ross et al., 1999) was designed to capture the frequency with which 24 instructional practices are implemented during direct observation of classrooms. The practices range from traditional (e.g., direct instruction and independent seatwork) to alternative, predominantly student-centered methods associated with educational reforms (e.g., cooperative learning, project-based learning, inquiry, discussion, using technology as a learning tool).

The strategies, which were identified through surveys and discussions involving policy makers, researchers, administrators, and teachers, are considered to be most useful in providing indicators of schools' instructional philosophies and implementation of commonly used reform designs (Ross et al., 2004). The final items on the SOM are used to record the level of student attention and/or interest and the amount of time focused on academics.

Multi-class vs. Targeted (Single-class) Observations

The *SOM* is used for two types of direct classroom observation: multi-class (whole school, grade, or program) and targeted (single-class).

Multi-class

Multi-class observations are used to capture routine classroom practices that typically occur on a regular basis in a whole school, one or more grades, or program. Therefore, this type of observation involves an extended timeframe (3 hours) in which multiple classrooms are randomly observed. For instance, one whole-school observation consists of an observer spending 3 hours in a school conducting 15-minute observations in approximately 10 randomly selected classrooms. If the observation were a whole-grade or whole-program, the observer would randomly visit classrooms in the selected grade(s) or those of teachers participating in the program.

Classes should be selected in a random (or non-biased) manner to help ensure the sample is representative of the teachers and the grades in the school. At the conclusion of the 3 hours, the observer records the frequency with which the various instructional practices were observed. At least six (6) three-hour observation periods are recommended to obtain a broad and valid perspective of the school's instructional practices.

Targeted (Single-class)

Even though the multi-class observations provide a comprehensive sample of classroom practices, a specific intervention strategy such as use of technology, higher-order questioning, or partner reading may be “missed” due to the random nature of whole school visits. Targeted observations may also be used if the goal is to better understand. Targeted observations capture classroom practices throughout a lesson by observing one entire class period during a prescheduled or random visit.

For prescheduled observations, the teacher is asked to implement a lesson that uses the “targeted” strategy during a class period selected by the teacher. For example, the observer would schedule a time to observe a technology integration lesson. This approach provides data representing teachers’ best practices because they know they are going to be observed and are aware of the lesson focus.

Random targeted observations also occur during a class period, but they are unscheduled. For instance, if 9th grade Algebra 1 teachers are implementing a hands-on curriculum for which they received intensive professional development, the targeted visit could occur on any day during an Algebra 1 class. These data represent routine instructional practices in a focused context.

The teachers for targeted observations are randomly selected from all of the eligible teachers to avoid schools providing a “hand-picked” list of their best teachers. Again, to ensure that a representative sample is collected, at least six targeted observations should be conducted at each school.

The SOM Instruments

Both multi-class and targeted *SOM* observations require the use of two instruments: one for data collection during the observation and one for data summary after the observation.

Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measure

The *Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measures* are used to record observed instructional practices and record brief notes describing the observed strategies. One form is completed every 15 minutes. For a multi-class observation, one *Notes* form would be completed for each classroom visited during one, three-hour, school observation period. For a targeted visit, one *Notes* form would be completed every 15 minutes of the entire lesson.



■ SOM Data Summary Form

The *SOM Data Summary Form* is used to summarize how frequently the strategies were observed during the visit. The frequency is recorded via a five-point rubric that ranges from Not Observed to Extensively observed. Specific instrument details are provided below.

SOM Observers

■ All SOM Observers must:

- Receive formal training regarding use of the *SOM*.
- Read this manual in its entirety.
- Briefly review the manual prior to school observations.
- Bring the manual to the school during observations to reference as needed.
- Ensure that all SOM documents are complete, accurate, and submitted on time.

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SOM Administration Procedures

Before visiting schools, the observer should ensure that the principal is aware of and has approved the observation process. Teachers should be informed about this data collection process and know what to expect during the classroom observation. Conversation with the school principal or school leadership team prior to the first school visit will pave the way for a successful experience.

SOM Administration Guidelines

MULTI-CLASS	TARGETED (single-class)
<p><i>Prior to the Visit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school contact to set day of the 3-hour visit. Note that teachers should not be apprised of the exact day or time of classroom visits. • Obtain map of the school with teachers' names and room numbers. • Obtain lunch, library, music, etc. schedules to plan visits. • Take the time to pencil in the top portion of a Classroom Observation Notes form for each class you plan to visit. • Use the school map and schedules to arrange the forms in visitation order based on classroom locations and schedule. You will want to move between classrooms as efficiently as possible. • Call to ask about any special events or changes to the schedule that would affect your observation plan. 	<p><i>Prior to the Visit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school contact person or the randomly selected teachers to schedule each targeted classroom observation. • Call to ask about any special events or changes to the schedule that would affect your observation plan.
<p><i>At the School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always check into the office when arriving at the school. • Ask principal or school contact to identify any classes that have multi-age grouping or between class ability grouping in the classes. 	<p><i>At the School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always check into the office when arriving at the school.

SOM Materials

A clipboard or hard-back folder is useful for keeping the forms anchored and in order. Because you may need to erase marks, the *SOM Data Summary Form* must be completed with a Number 2 pencil. "Bubble" areas on the form must be darkened completely and erasures should be as clean as possible for accurate recording. Please do not use check marks, slashes or anything of that nature as they are not read by the scanner. Below is a list of materials needed to complete one multi-class or one targeted *SOM* observation.



SOM Observation Materials

MULTI-CLASS	TARGETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clipboard <i>SOM</i> Observer's Manual #2 Pencils (mechanical are best to avoid the need for a pencil sharpener) <i>Classroom Observation Notes for SOM</i> (10-12) <i>School Observation Measure (SOM) Data Summary</i> (one) Introductory Letter (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clipboard <i>SOM</i> Observer's Manual #2 Pencils (mechanical are best to avoid the need for a pencil sharpener) <i>Classroom Observation Notes for SOM</i> (3 - 6) <i>School Observation Measure (SOM) Data Summary</i> (one)

The SOM Observation Period

As previously mentioned, the *SOM* is used for 3-hour multi-class observations to obtain information regarding common, everyday classroom practices and for targeted observations to observe specific instructional strategies. Details of the multi-class and targeted observations are below.



SOM Observation Period

MULTI-CLASS	TARGETED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A multi-class <i>SOM</i> involves observing multiple classes during a three-hour block of time. • The observation period for each classroom is defined as 15 minutes. • Approximately ten (10) different classrooms will be observed. • Classes should be selected in a random (or non-biased) manner. • Never is a multi-class <i>SOM</i> to be completed unless <i>at least eight</i> (8) classrooms are observed. • Observation blocks should be selected so that both morning and afternoon activities on different days of the week are recorded over the course of the school year. • When conducting multiple multi-class <i>SOM</i> observations throughout the year, be sure to select different teachers for each observation – recycling the list when all teachers have been observed. • Typically, only core subject or those likely to use “conventional” pedagogy (not art, music, or physical education) are chosen. Some evaluations might also include observations of foreign language or special education classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A targeted <i>SOM</i> involves observing one entire lesson (typically 45-90 minutes) during a prescheduled or random visit. • The observation period is recorded in 15 minute timeframes. • When conducting multiple targeted <i>SOM</i> observations, be sure to randomly select different teachers for each observation.

In the Classroom

When entering the classroom, adopt a friendly manner with both the teacher and students. When conducting multi-class observations, a sample letter (Appendix B) can be reproduced on letterhead stationery to hand to the teacher as a brief introduction and to clarify the purpose of your visit. After one or two visits to the same teacher's classroom, it will not be necessary to use the introduction letter when visiting.



While in the classroom, try to be unobtrusive so both students and teacher will behave “naturally,” without feeling overly self-conscious about your presence. However, if students are engaged in student-centered work (e.g., seatwork, use of computers, projects, sustained writing, or cooperative learning), it is usually appropriate and encouraged to walk around the room to determine more clearly what they and the teacher are doing. Comments about observed activities can be quickly noted on the Observer Notes Sheet while you are in the classroom and expanded after leaving and before going to the next observation. Times when certain events in the classroom begin and end are often extremely useful for characterizing the classroom and should be noted as appropriate.

You may have unanswered questions at the end of a 15 minute session that are important in accurately recording one or more of the *SOM* categories. Clarifying questions may be asked if an appropriate time can be found (e.g., during a break or after school) to speak with teachers without disrupting classroom activities.

General Observation Guidelines

- If an unexpected interruption occurs during a 15-minute multi-class observation, the observation data can only be included if the class was observed for **at least** 10 minutes.
- If a class has a substitute teacher rather than the regular teacher, complete the observation if it is a multi-class observation, but do not complete it if it is a targeted observation.
- If the class you are observing goes to another location (e.g., library, computer lab) during your designated timeframe (15 minutes for multi-class), go with the class and continue collecting data **if** the regular classroom teacher is participating in the instruction in the new location

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Completing the SOM Instruments

Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measure

One *Classroom Observation Notes for SOM* (Appendix A) is designed to capture 15 minutes of classroom observation data. Below are brief descriptions of information to be completed.

■ School

Record the name of the school.

■ Grade

Please record the grade level(s) of the students in the class you are observing.

■ ID Number

Leave this field blank unless otherwise instructed.

■ Observer Name

Record your last name in this space.

■ Time In/Time Out

For multi-class observations, the actual time you enter and leave the room should be recorded. For targeted observations, record each 15-minute timeframe of the observation. If the observation time is abbreviated, indicate how many minutes were actually spent in the classroom and provide the reason.

■ Observation Date and SOM

Please record the date of observation and the SOM # (if instructed to record the SOM#). The SOM# indicates which observation this is in the planned total visits per school for the year.

NOTE

To ensure confidentiality, teacher names are not to be formally recorded on these sheets. Instead, include descriptors in the Subject/Activity Overview space to help you identify classes, should you have questions for a particular teacher.

■ Subject/Activity Overview

Record subject(s) taught during the observation and add descriptors to help remember the specific classroom being observed.

■ Target?

Mark Yes or No to indicate if this Classroom Notes Form is part of a targeted observation.

SOM Data Summary Form

After completing all of the multi-class observations or completing a targeted observation, the individual *Classroom Observation Notes* forms should be used as a reference for completing the *SOM Data Summary* form (Appendix C).

When completing the *SOM Data Summary Form*, it is important that the scoring **not be a “counting” or “averaging”** from the individual observations. Instead, use the *Notes* forms for reflection and for support of your impressions about the **extent** to which each major component was present in the school (multi-class) or during the lesson (targeted). Use the following rubric to rate each item on the *SOM Data Summary* Form.

Rubric for SOM Scoring

Rating	MULTI-CLASS	TARGETED
(0) Not Observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy was never observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy was never observed
(1) Rarely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed in only one or two classes Receives isolated use and/or little time in classes Clearly not a prevalent and/or emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives isolated use and/or little time during the class Clearly not a prevalent and/or emphasized component of teaching and learning during the class
(2) Occasionally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed in some classes Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis in classes Not a prevalent and/or emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis during the class Not a prevalent and/or emphasized component of teaching and learning during the class
(3) Frequently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed in many but not all classes Receives substantive time or emphasis in classes A prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives substantive time or emphasis during the class A prevalent component of teaching and learning during the class
(4) Extensively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed in most or all classes Receives substantive time and/or emphasis in classes A highly prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receives substantive time and/or emphasis during the class A highly prevalent component of teaching and learning during the class


When completing the *SOM Data Summary Form* for a multi-class observation, remember that you are making a subjective judgment for the whole school, program, or grade based on your impressions of all classrooms observed during this three-hour visit. When completing one for a targeted visit, you are making a subjective judgment on what occurred during the entire lesson.

The two factors that should influence your judgment most directly are:

- number (frequency) of classrooms in which the strategy/event was observed (multi-class only)
- The **emphasis** (time) given to that strategy/event within classes (multi-class and targeted).

Neither factor should be applied in a rigid fashion, such that a frequency or time count leads directly to a particular rating.

Over-Coding Alert!

As you work through the SOM Observer's Manual, you will notice strategies that receive an  "Over-Coding Alert!" These are items that less skilled observers might miscode by applying their personal definitions of SOM strategies rather than using the standardized definitions.

To avoid miscoding, carefully review the " Do NOT Code" sections of each SOM strategy.

MULTI-CLASS SOM Data Summary Example

The observer visits ten classes at School A and sees experiential learning in six classes. However, the uses tend to be very limited (e.g., a few students using manipulative briefly and intermittently). The observer rates this school a "2" (Occasionally) on "experiential hands-on learning." Even though the strategy was used in a majority of classes, the observer felt that emphasis was minimal (rather than substantive or high) in this school on this day.

The observer visits school B and sees "experiential hands-on learning" in five of ten classes. This time, she rates the school "3" (Frequently) because the practices were highly prevalent in the five classes, involving many students for much of the 15 minute observation period. The observer felt that, at this school on this day, "experiential learning" was a frequently used, prevalent component of teaching and learning. Thus, even though experiential learning was observed in fewer classes at School B than at School A, the higher rating was given to School B.

TARGETTED SOM Data Summary Example

The observer visits Classroom A to observe a lesson involving laptop computers. After a five-minute introduction of assignment details, student pairs share a laptop to complete a PowerPoint® presentation on the history of their city. Students work on the presentations for 30-minutes. For the last ten minutes of the class, the teacher provides a review of tomorrow's activities. The observer rates this class a "4" (Extensively) for "cooperative learning" and use of "technology as a learning tool" because all students in the class worked cooperatively on presentations for the majority of the class.

The observer visits Classroom B to observe another lesson involving laptop computers. The teacher begins the lesson by showing a 15-minute PowerPoint® presentation on the history of their city. The remaining 30 minutes of class involves all students but four completing an "Our City History" worksheet. The four students use laptop computers to conduct an Internet search to find additional information about their city. The observer rates this class as a "2" (Occasionally) for "direct instruction" and "computer for instructional delivery," a "3" (Frequently) for "independent seatwork" and a "1" (Rarely) for "technology as a learning tool," because only four students used the computers as a learning tool.

4 Definition of SOM Terms

The following section provides definitions, describes behaviors, and delineates features of the seven categories included on the *Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measure* and *SOM Data Summary Form*. The seven categories include:

Instructional Orientation

- Direct Instruction
- Cooperative/Collaborative Learning
- Team Teaching
- Individual Tutoring

Classroom Organization

- Ability Groups
- Work Centers
- Multi-age/Multi-grade Grouping

Instructional Strategies

- Higher-Level Instructional Feedback
- Project-Based Learning
- Teacher Acting as a Coach/Facilitator
- Integration of Subject Areas
- Higher-Level Questioning
- Parent/Community Involvement in Learning Activities

Student Activities

- Independent Seatwork
- Systematic Individual Instruction
- Sustained Reading
- Student Discussion
- Experiential, Hands-on Learning
- Sustained Writing
- Independent Inquiry/Research

Technology Use

- Computer for Instructional Delivery
- Technology as a Learning Tool or Resource

Assessment

- Performance Assessment
- Student Self-assessment

Summary Items

- High Academic Focused Class Time
- High Level of Student Attention, Interest, Engagement

Instructional Orientation

Direct Instruction

- Teacher controlled
- Entire class or small group
- Academic focus
- Can be lecture format
- Can be questioning-type format



Direct instruction is teacher directed and controlled, provided to the entire class or a group, and *must* have an academic focus. Emphasis is on the teacher explaining a concept or skill (not just giving instructions), reading to the students, and possibly students practicing under teacher direction (i.e., controlled practice or guided practice) usually at their seats. Other common terms for this pattern of instruction are recitation or didactic, sometimes combined with seatwork. For purposes of this observation, seatwork alone, even if clearly teacher controlled and monitored, does not constitute direct instruction.



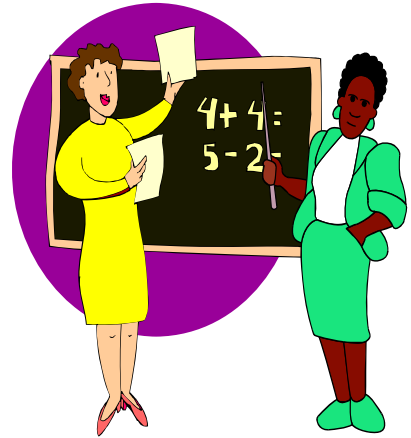
Do NOT Code

- Giving instructions on how to complete assignments
- Describing lesson activities
- Overseeing student seatwork
- Presentation or discussion of non-academic topics (e.g., student behavior, sports)

Team Teaching

- More than one teacher
- If teacher assistant (or non-certified individual), must be in *teaching* role
- Certified teachers do not have to teach simultaneously, but both must be present and responsible

More than one certified teacher is present in the classroom for the apparent purposes of participating in a teaching role (not simply observing the others). All teachers share instructional responsibility for the class. The presence of a teacher's aide (parent or student teacher) who simply monitors and assists students with non-academic tasks would **not** be considered team teaching.



Do NOT Code

- Parent observing the class
- Teacher aide grading papers at desk
- Volunteer monitoring student behavior

Cooperative/Collaborative Learning

- Small groups interacting
- Partner reading
- Emphasis (time) is the orientation, not quality
- Learning to cooperate

Students work together on tasks or group projects requiring inter-group cooperation to meet a goal. The focus may be academic or learning to cooperate through discussing procedures or roles in the group. Group size may range from pairs to larger groups of students. Partner reading should be classified as cooperative learning. If students are observed talking to and helping one another, you must ascertain that (a) there is an explicit expectation by the teacher for them to assist each other on the activity, and/or (b) there is a group product to be created at some later point (if they are not currently working on the product). Otherwise, do not code the activity as cooperative learning.



Do NOT Code

- Students talking together but not working on a group product or on an explicitly cooperative task
- Students organized into groups but working independently
- When conditions for cooperative learning (i.e., room arrangement) are in place, but cooperative learning is not observed within the time interval for that classroom visit

Individual Tutoring

(teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)



Over-Coding
Alert!

- Students receive 1:1 help
- Planned context
- Tutor and tutee roles clearly pre-established

Students receive one-on-one help to achieve academic objectives. This assistance can come from the teacher, a peer, volunteer, or a teacher assistant. Individual tutoring typically occurs in a *planned* context rather than in an informal context where a student or teacher answers a question or gives information when an immediate problem arises. The tutor should not be classified as “coaching” (see later section).



Do NOT Code

- A teacher who takes extra time to sit and help a student during the time that he is facilitating or coaching students as they complete independent assignments
- Students working in pairs to complete math problems

Classroom Organization

■ Ability Group

- Differentiated, within classroom, instruction based on performance level
- Note details from teacher



Students receive differentiated instruction based on their levels of performance. The students will be seated or working in like-ability groups formed on the basis of achievement within the classroom. It would be important to note any circumstances concerning differentiation of instruction on the basis of ability, how the groups were formed, and under what conditions and how often the groupings change. *If this information is not apparent, it may be necessary to ask the teacher.*



Do NOT Code

- A group of students working on different parts of an assignment
- Students grouped by categories other than ability (e.g., gender)

■ Multi-age/Multi-grade Grouping

- Note details from teacher or principal

Generally, schools group students by grades that correspond roughly to students' ages. A current trend, however, is to use multi-grade/multi-age groups for classrooms and courses. These groups are often formed according to estimates of students' abilities, past achievements, or projected educational careers. It is important to note the range of grades/ages of the students and the criteria of formation. *If this information is not apparent, it may be necessary to ask the teacher or principal of the school.*



Do NOT Code

- When in a high school, as most classes are likely to be multiage to some degree (unless your evaluation specifies that high school classes should be marked as multi-grade)

Work Centers

(for individuals or groups)

- Observed use of designated spaces containing special materials
- Observed use of work center
- Reading “rug”



Work centers (or learning centers) are designated spaces within a classroom (or the building) containing special materials and resources for individuals or groups to use. In elementary classrooms, a rug area where the whole class may gather for listening to stories would be considered a work center if displays and/or other resources to augment learning are provided. If computers are clustered as opposed to scattered in the room, then observed usage will generally constitute observation of a work center.



Do NOT Code

- Computer use, unless the computers are located together in a **designated center**
- If the centers are **not used** or integrated into the teaching during the observation

Instructional Strategies

Higher-Order Instructional Feedback (written or verbal)

- Providing answers and information relative to progress in learning
- Goes beyond “correct” or “incorrect”
- Gives explanation, new information

Feedback is the provision of answers to exercises and other information relative to **progress in learning**. Higher-level instructional feedback is rich and elaborative, providing opportunities for students to extend their learning **beyond the specific response/question being addressed**. The occasional “motivational” or “affective” response to students, such as “Good job,” or “I like the way you are listening,” etc. is not considered instructional feedback, nor is a limited response such as “That’s right” or “That one is incorrect.”



Higher-level feedback can be present in all grade levels and can take on many forms. Of course, it **should reflect the ages of the students** in the class. For example: If a first grader says, “I live in Tennessee,” the teacher might reply, “That’s correct. Tennessee is a state. You also live in the city of Nashville.” If the children are older, the teacher might expand her response to include finding Tennessee on a map of the United States and discussing bordering states. She also might initiate a discussion about what constitutes a “state” compared to a city or a country. Clearly, the teacher’s responses must be appropriate for the content being taught and the time allocated.



Do NOT Code

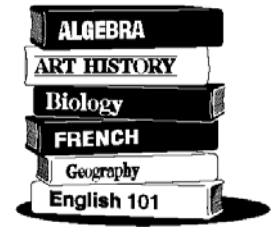
- Motivational comments such as “Good Work,” “Great handwriting”
- Short responses such as, “Your answer is complete,” “That is incorrect, do it again.”

Integration of Subject Areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units)



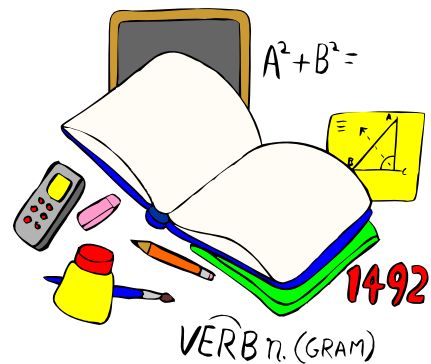
Over-Coding
Alert!

- Often occurs in thematic units/ project-based learning or oriented to a guiding question that is ongoing and tangible to students.
- Instructional activities should meet major objectives for each discipline.



In instances of subject matter integration, there will be a “planned” or “explicit” overlap or use of knowledge from more than one subject area. Thus, the information, or content, is not divided into discrete disciplines but rather is fused and related to different areas. When subject areas are integrated, **the instructional activities meet major objectives for each discipline.**

This category also includes learning activities oriented around a guiding question or theme. Unlike isolated lessons, the theme or question is ongoing and tangible to students. For example, a theme could be “Appreciating Diversity in Our Community.” Activities include collecting and analyzing survey data from family and community members (math), researching the ethnic background of the community (social studies), and writing a script for a class play to be presented at parent night (language arts).



Integration of subject areas is **not** “routine” combination of two or more subjects, such as doing word problems in math (that’s routine math) viewing a graph in a science textbook (that’s routine science), or writing answers to social studies questions.



Do NOT Code

- Casual references to multiple subjects during a lecture, e.g., “notice the graph of opinions in today’s newspaper”
- Writing exercises in non-language arts classes - when writing skills are not being taught

Project-based Learning

(Examples: Application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation)

- An inquiry or question guides the production of authentic work
- Key factors:
 - Planned
 - Long-term
 - Tangible products
 - Culminating performance/product

In project-based learning, the focus of instruction is centered on an inquiry or question whereby skills and knowledge can be acquired in the process of producing authentic work. Projects may also result in tangible products, like exhibits, books, research reports, and community service. For example, to explore the basic laws of physics and how the laws are applied to designs of amusement park rides, a high school class constructed working models of a roller coaster, double Ferris wheel, merry-go-round, and swings. Another example might be the growing, harvesting, and marketing of a garden and its products to learn various science, social studies, and math concepts.



Project-based learning is observed when students are actually seen working on the projects as opposed to teachers lecturing or giving information. Projects often unfold over time. Therefore, you may need to discuss with the teacher whether the student activity observed is actually connected to a “project.”



Do NOT Code

- Students **working on activities** that are related to the current lesson rather than a long-term project

Higher-Level Questioning

- Goes beyond factual information
- Asks students to explain "why..." "what would happen if..."

Higher-level questions are asked by teachers to move students beyond factual learning to stimulate discussion, debate, the offering of opinions about cause-and-effect relationships, speculation about hypothetical situations, or thinking creatively about problems. Questions devoted to *higher-level* objectives will encompass application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of what has been learned. Sufficient probing and teacher "wait" time may be practiced so that students will have guidance and time for thinking.



NOTE

Teachers employing higher-level questioning strategies seek to elicit higher-level thinking and/or problem solving strategies on the part of students. Teachers engaging in higher-level feedback (refer to earlier category) are providing students with additional information, suggestions, connections, etc.

Do NOT Code

- When questions solicit factual responses such as names, definitions, or correct answers to math problems
- When higher-level feedback is given but higher-level questions are not asked

Teacher Acting as Coach/Facilitator

- Academic Focus
- Role is supportive but more than motivational only
- Occurs during student-centered activity

The teacher assumes roles that are more supporting, less directive, and less teacher centered; he/she serves as a guide when students are working independently or in groups rather than as a presenter of information.



Teachers employing a coaching model will not only verbally encourage students to succeed but will serve as experts by deliberate modeling, by structuring the environment so that students can be successful, or by providing feedback or making recommendations about student learning.

Coaching **must** include an academic focus that may range from helping students with basic skills to leading students to higher-level, discovery, or inquiry learning.

"You have done a good job with those calculations. How can you make a graph that would illustrate what you found?"

A teacher walking through the classroom, glancing at student work and making comments such as, "I'm glad to see you using your best handwriting," or "We're almost out of time, better work a little faster," is **not** coaching. To act as a coach/facilitator, the teacher must look carefully at the student's work and make constructive comments or suggestions. For example "Your story has a lot of action. I like that. Now write a descriptive paragraph that will help me "see" your main character."

Do NOT Code

- Non-academic comments such as "You are working well today," "Sit up straight"
- Short responses that do not assist in promoting learning, such as, "That sentence is written correctly," "Great job using the microscope"

■ Parent/Community Involvement in Learning Activities

- Parents are in or close to the observed classroom
- Parents support learning, not just observe

Parents and family members may serve as tutors in the school or be otherwise actively involved in student learning by assisting with materials, monitoring work, or guiding a learning activity. Although teachers and principals may report strong parent involvement, and you may observe parents outside the classrooms, if no parents are observed involved in learning activities during the classroom observations, code this category as “not observed.”



Do NOT Code

- A parent who is observing the class
- Parents decorating a table for the monthly class birthday party

Student Activities

■ Independent Seat Work

(self-paced worksheets, individual assignments)

- Students independently using **worksheets or textbook problems** to practice content
- Could include practice test, but not actual test

Students are *independently* using worksheets, completing other assignments, or taking practice tests that provide review exercises or questions to practice the content they have studied. It is a practice test if grades are not recorded.

Independent seatwork may occur when students are organized in clusters or small groups. The differentiating factor (between independent seatwork and cooperative/collaborative learning) is how learning takes place.



Do NOT Code

If students are:

- using hands-on manipulatives
- engaged in independent inquiry or research
- working on the computer
- writing a paper or in their journals
- reading a book other than their textbook, e.g., novel or story

■ Experiential, Hands-on Learning

- Engagement through concrete experiences
- May involve manipulatives or other hands-on resources
- May involve students engaged in computer- or non-computer-based simulations

Experiential learning actively engages students through concrete experiences. Students will be using manipulatives, science equipment, resources, games, or simulations that assist the learning by making the information less symbolic and more concrete. Routine drawing would generally *not* be considered in this category. Pictures or objects used by the teacher for illustration but not touched by students are also *not* representative of experiential learning.



Do NOT Code

- If students are watching the teacher demonstrate the use of science equipment
- If students are completing activity worksheets

Systematic Individual Instruction

(differential assignments geared to individual needs)



- Modification of assignment according to an individual's needs or interests
- Computer instruction selected by the teacher adaptively for the individual
- Computer instruction that adapts the lesson presented to student needs

Planned adaptations and modifications to the assignments, learning activities, or assessments (not just to the pace of assignment completion) are made according to individual needs and/or interests. Systematic individual instruction may be evidenced by some students receiving different worksheets than others or using different texts. "Routine" independent work where all students essentially complete the same assignments at their own pace would not be considered individual instruction. Similarly, games or other non-learning activities provided for students completing assignments early or to occupy special-needs students would not be representative of systematic individual instruction.



Do NOT Code

- If teacher is providing unplanned academic assistance by being a facilitator/coach
- If students are completing assignments based on ability grouping

■ Sustained Writing

(self-selected or teacher-generated topics)

- Teacher or self-selected topics for stories, themes, extended responses to a question or prompt

Students are given an opportunity to write stories or compositions on either self-selected or teacher-selected topics.

Students taking notes, writing answers to textbook questions, or filling in blanks would *not* be coded as sustained writing. A key concept for sustained writing/composition is freedom to express ideas; in sustained writing, there are no right or wrong answers.



Do NOT Code

- If students are copying reference information or writing short answers to a test
- If students are writing a sentence for each vocabulary word
- If the writing is in connection to the regular textbook or worksheets

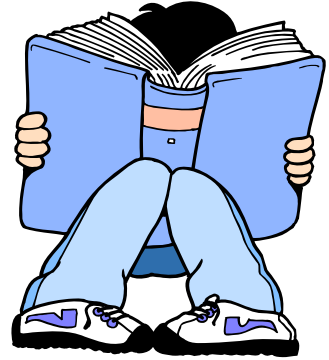
■ Sustained Reading

(self-selected or teacher-generated topics)

- Students individually reading a story or reference book
- Purpose is “open” reading, not to find answers to objective questions

Students are given the opportunity in class to **individually read self-selected or teacher-selected reference books, novels, or other print material**. “Sustained” reading requires sufficient time to read extended portions of text (considering the students’ grade level.) Reading isolated sentences or passages for the primary purpose of answering questions or obtaining information, or reading aloud to others would not be coded as sustained reading.

Having time to read independently a novel or play in class - even if the students will be tested on it - *is* considered sustained reading in most cases.



Do NOT Code

- Reading the regular textbook
- Reading story excerpts printed on a worksheet with questions

Independent Inquiry/Research

- Independent work to gather facts or answers to questions for purpose of sharing
- More sustained process than using a textbook
- Can be in a group setting

Students have opportunities to work **independently of the teacher** and the regular textbook to gather facts on a problem or question. The research can be teacher-suggested or selected on the basis of student interest. At the elementary level, students are likely to be using learning centers and resources within the classroom. At the secondary level, resources from outside the classroom may be used – but you must see them in use. Research can be text or multimedia based and may (but does not necessarily) involve online resources. Independent inquiry is typically more sustained than simply using a textbook or isolated resource to answer a question.



Do NOT Code

- Searching for information in the textbook
- Collecting specific information from teacher-provided resources or Internet sites

Student Discussion

- Student talk beyond response to teacher questions
- Typically planned, **must be prompted**

Students have opportunities to talk, share experiences, debate or converse with each other on a prompted topic. Discussion may be whole class, small group, or even in dyads. Teachers may assume varying levels of directing the discussion (e.g., moderator, facilitator, expert, observer). Discussions will typically be oriented around a particular higher-level question or theme, and will be more sustained than the student interactions that take place during "cooperative learning."



Do NOT Code

- Social or informal discussion
- Students providing responses to teacher questions

Technology Use

Computer for Instructional Delivery

(e.g., CAI, drill and practice)

- Computers support or present the instruction
- Teacher or students may be using

Students have access to computers that are used during class time to support instruction. The teacher may use a program to demonstrate and provide examples to the whole class, or students may **use the computers to practice** and learn concepts. The computer is “teaching” rather than being used as a tool (see below) to complete a learning task.



Examples: a **PowerPoint® presented by the teacher**; information on a topic presented by the Internet or a CD; and a computer-based tutorial lesson.



Do NOT Code

- Use of traditional technology such as overhead projectors or audio or video cassette players
- If students are using basic computer applications to **produce products**, such as a word-processed report, a spreadsheet graph, or **creating a PowerPoint®** presentation (these should be coded as "Technology as a Learning Tool or Resource")

Technology as a Learning Tool or Resource

- Used by students - e.g. Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, production of word processed reports

Technology resources and software applications (databases, spreadsheets, web browsers, word processing, etc.) are being **used by students** for obtaining, manipulating, and communicating information to complete a learning task for the observed class. The student or the teacher can select the resources. Products are student-generated.

The technology can include such tools as digital cameras, science probes, graphing calculators, hand-held computers, and MP3 players (for educational purposes).



Do NOT Code

- Use of computers for drill and practice activities
- Use of computer to present information - these should be coded as "Computer for Instructional Delivery"

Assessment

Performance Assessment Strategies



- Observed demonstration of knowledge
- Examples: Portfolios, charts of progress
- **Must** involve a formal assessment (rubric or rating scale)

Students are given opportunities to *demonstrate* their knowledge and skill in a variety of ways. Organized methods for showing student progress (portfolio development, charts of progress, etc.) go beyond paper/pencil tests and report card grades and must involve some formal or systematic assessment system (e.g. rubric or rating scale).



Do NOT Code

- Students simply placing graded papers in a file
- Students placing homework problems on the board while the teacher leads a discussion of how to solve the problems

Student Self-Assessment

(*portfolios, individual record books*)



- Guided reflections about learning
- Feedback is *not* by self-scoring or computer

Students have opportunities to reflect on what was taught or learned. They may keep portfolios or other types of learning logs and/or have checklists to guide their reflections.

Students are encouraged/expected and provided opportunities to develop awareness of and appreciation for their own academic progress.



Do NOT Code

- Simply obtaining test feedback by **self-scoring** or by a computer program
- Students grading each other's papers

Summary Items

High Academically Focused Class Time

- Estimate of time typical student spends in educationally relevant activity

Each class observed is assessed on the basis of whether class time is highly academically focused. Regardless of the quality of teaching, high academic focus uses class time for curriculum-based teaching and learning. Academic focus is reduced by such factors as discipline problems, teacher activity not associated with instructional objectives, PA announcements, interruptions, transitions, etc.



High Level of Student Attention, Interest, Engagement

- Overall estimate of student attention

This is an overall estimate of the degree to which the classes observed appeared to be highly actively focused on (attentive to) the activities. Each class is assessed on the basis of whether student attention/interest/engagement is high for the typical student for most of the session.



NOTE

The assessment of student attention, interest, and/or engagement should be rated independently of academic focus. It is possible for a class to have a high level of academically focused class time (e.g., the teacher is lecturing on academic content) while the level of student attention is very low (e.g., many students appear to be sleeping). Or, conversely, all students may be actively engaged in an activity with little or no academic focus (e.g., a pizza party)

5

Submitting SOM Instruments

Paper-based Submission of SOM Instruments

SOM observers will be provided with sufficient materials for conducting the required number of school observations and returning the completed instruments in postage-paid envelopes or submitting the data by entering it into the online system. Specific details for submitting Multi-class and Targeted paper-based forms are below. Separate guidelines will be provided when the online system is used for data submission. In addition, observers will receive an observer's packet tailored to their assigned research study.

MULTI-CLASS	TARGETED
<p>Complete the following steps for <i>each</i> multi-class SOM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group all <i>Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measures</i> (10-12) for the three-hour observation. • Ensure that all forms have the date, times of observation, and SOM number, if multiple SOMs are conducted. • Staple or clip the 10 to 12 <i>Notes</i> forms together. • Ensure that the <i>SOM Data Summary Form</i> is accurate and complete. <p>Make sure all strategies have been scored (bubbled in), even if they are "Not Observed."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the <i>Notes Forms</i> with its completed <i>SOM Data Summary Form</i> in the provided envelope - do NOT staple the <i>Summary Form</i>. <p>Repeat the above for any remaining multi-class SOMs</p>	<p>Complete the following steps for <i>each</i> targeted SOM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group all <i>Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measures</i> (3-6) for the observed lesson. • Ensure that all forms have the date, times of observation, and SOM number, if multiple SOMs are conducted. • Staple or clip the 3 to 6 <i>Notes</i> forms together. • Ensure that the <i>SOM Data Summary Form</i> is accurate and complete. <p>Make sure all strategies have been scored (bubbled in), even if they are "Not Observed."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the <i>Notes Forms</i> with its completed <i>SOM Data Summary Form</i> in the provided envelope - do NOT staple the <i>Summary Form</i>. <p>Repeat this for any remaining targeted SOMs</p>

ONLINE Submission of SOM Instruments

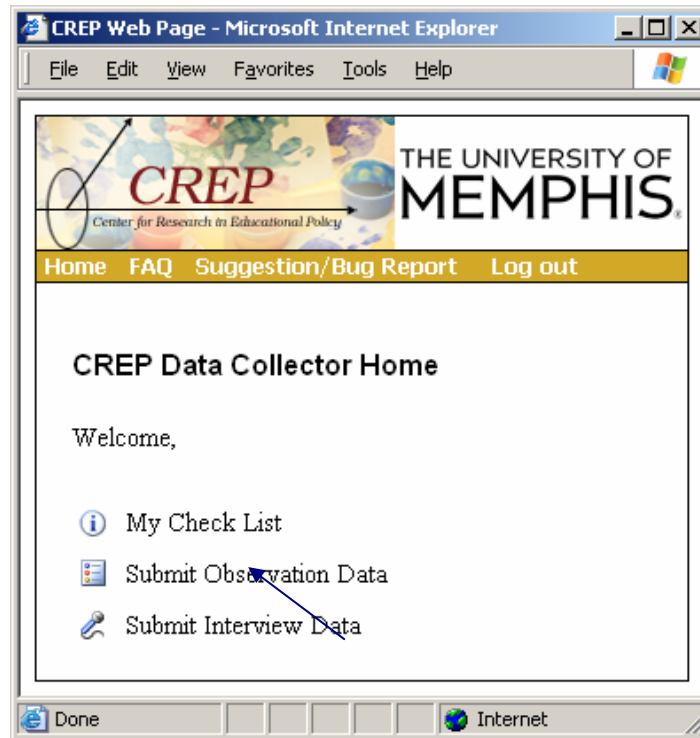
Some evaluations will have observers submit SOM results via CREP's online Survey Management System (SMS). In most cases, you will still be asked to submit the paper copies of your *SOM Notes* and *SOM Data Summary* forms as archival documents. Step-by-step guidelines and associated screen shots for entering your SOM data into the SMS and for viewing reports are provided below.

1. Log onto <http://crep.memphis.edu/survey> using your case sensitive User ID and Password.

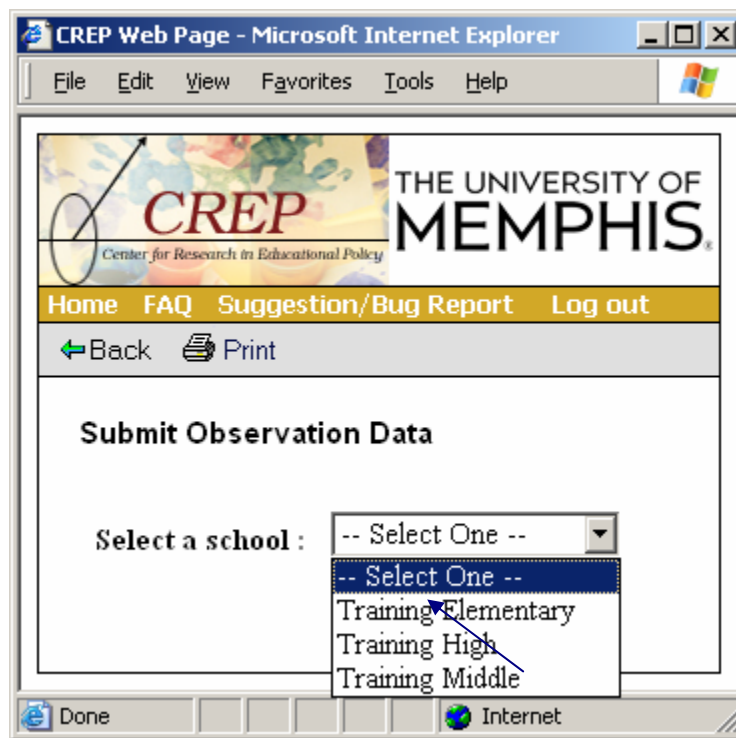
- Sample User ID: TrainingObserver
- Sample Password: creptrain
- (Each observer will be issued a unique User ID and Password)

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "CREP Web Page - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL "http://crep.memphis.edu/survey". The page features a header with the CREP logo (Center for Research in Educational Policy) and The University of Memphis logo. Below the header, the main content area is titled "CREP Survey System". It prompts the user to "Please log in:" and provides input fields for "User ID:" (containing "TrainingObserver") and "Password:" (masked with dots). An "Enter" button is located below the password field. At the bottom of the login section, there is a link that says "Forget your password?". The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and "Internet".

2. Click on the Submit Observation Data link:



3. Choose your school from the drop-down menu:



4. Select the observation to be entered:

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File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

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Submit Observation Data

Select a school : Training Elementary

	Instrument	Year	Observation Name
Select	LOT (Literacy Observation Tool Data Summary)	2005 - 2006	Training LOT 05-06
Select	RSCA (Rubric for Student-Centered Activities)	2005 - 2006	Training RSCA 05-06
Select	SCU (Survey of Computer Use)	2005 - 2006	Training SCU 05-06
Select	SOM (School Observation Measure)	2005 - 2006	Training SOM 05-06

Done Internet

5. Using your cursor click to select a response for each item. Scroll down to fill out the entire observation.

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School Observation Measure

School Name: Training Elementary
City: Training
State: TN
Today's Date: Sep 30, 2005

Observer Name:
Date of Observation: Sep 30, 2005

<i>Instructional Orientation</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
1. Direct instruction (lecture)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Team teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Cooperative/collaborative learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Classroom Organization</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
1. Ability groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Multi-age grouping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Work centers (for individuals or groups)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<i>Instructional Strategies</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
1. Higher-level instructional feedback (written or verbal) to enhance student learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Integration of subject areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Project-based learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Use of higher-level questioning strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teacher acting as a coach/facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Done Internet

6. Once you have completed the observation click on the Preview button on the toolbar:

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File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

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Home FAQ Suggestion/Bug Report Log out

Back Preview Print

Technology Use	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
1. Computer for instructional delivery (e.g. CAI, drill & practice)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Technology as a learning tool or resource (e.g., Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, multi-media, CD Rom, Laser disk)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Assessment	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
1. Performance assessment strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Student self-assessment (portfolios, individual record books)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Summary Items	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
1. High academically focused class time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. High level of student attention/interest/engagement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

Note: Click on the Preview button on the toolbar to confirm your responses. Then you can submit the responses.

Done Internet

7. Check the Preview to determine all responses were entered correctly. If you wish to change any responses simply click on the Back button located on the toolbar and change the incorrect selection. Then return to step 6.

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File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

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Home FAQ Suggestion/Bug Report Log out

Back Submit Print

School Observation Measure

School Name: Training Elementary Observer Name:

City: Training Date of Observation: Sep 30, 2005

State: TN

Today's Date: Sep 30, 2005

Instructional Orientation	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
1. Direct instruction (lecture)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Team teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Cooperative/collaborative learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Classroom Organization	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
1. Ability groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Multi-age grouping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Work centers (for individuals or groups)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Instructional Strategies	Not observed	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Extensively
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Done Internet

8. Once you have determined all responses were correctly selected choose to Submit your observation:

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Back Submit Print

School Observation Measure

School Name: Training Elementary Observer Name:

City: Training Date of Observation: Sep 30, 2005

State: TN

Today's Date: Sep 30, 2005

<i>Instructional Orientation</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
1. Direct instruction (lecture)				Selected	
2. Team teaching			Selected		
3. Cooperative/collaborative learning			Selected		
4. Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)			Selected		

<i>Classroom Organization</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
1. Ability groups		Selected			
2. Multi-age grouping			Selected		
3. Work centers (for individuals or groups)				Selected	

<i>Instructional Strategies</i>	<i>Not observed</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Extensively</i>
---------------------------------	---------------------	---------------	---------------------	-------------------	--------------------

9. When you submit your observation you will receive a confirmation number. Please write down this confirmation number for verification.

REFERENCES FOR SCIENTIFIC AND PSYCHOMETRIC VALIDATION

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Appendix A

Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measure (SOM[®])



Classroom Observation Notes for School Observation Measure (SOM®)

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School			
Grade		ID#	

Observer Name	
Observation Date	

Time In		Time Out	
SOM	# ____ of ____		
Target?	YES ____	NO ____	

Subject/Activity Overview _____

Directions: Use these “notes” to record whether each of the following was observed during the 15 minute observation period. (O = Observed.) You may wish to write comments that will assist you in qualitatively synthesizing classroom data to arrive at a holistic school observation summary.

<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Orientation	O	Observation Notes
Direct instruction		
Team teaching		
Cooperative/ ^{RSCA} collaborative learning	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	
Individual tutoring		

<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Organization	O	Observation Notes
Ability group		
Multi-age/Multi-grade grouping		
Work centers		

<input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Strategies	O	Observation Notes
Higher-order instructional feedback		
Integration of subject areas		
Project-based learning/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	
Higher-level questioning/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	
Teacher acting as coach/facilitator		
Parent/community involvement		

<input type="checkbox"/> Student Activities	O	Observation Notes
Independent seatwork		
Experiential, hands-on learning/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	
Systematic individual instruction		
Sustained writing		
Sustained reading		
Independent inquiry/research/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	
Student discussion/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	

<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Use	O	Observation Notes
Computer for instructional delivery		
Technology as a learning tool/resource/ ^{RSCA}	^{RSCA} (01234, T)	

<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment	O	Observation Notes
Performance assessment strategies		
Student self-assessment		

Class Data for Summary Items	Low	Moderate	High
Level of academically focused class time			
Level of student attention/interest/engagement			

Instructional Orientation

Direct Instruction (lecture)

- Teacher controlled
- Entire class or small group
- Academic focus
- Lecture format
- Questioning-type format

Team Teaching

- More than one teacher
- If teacher assistant (or non-certified individual), must be in teaching role
- Certified teachers do not have to teach simultaneously, but both must be present and responsible

Cooperative [RSCA]/Collaborative Learning

- Small groups interacting
- Partner reading
- Emphasis (time) is the orientation, not quality
- Learning to cooperate

Individual Tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)

- Students receive 1:1 help
- Planned context
- Tutor and tutee roles clearly pre-established



Classroom Organization

Ability Group

- Differentiated instruction, within classroom, instruction based on performance level
- Note details from teacher

Multi-age/Multi-grade Grouping

- Note details from teacher or principal

Work Centers (for individuals or groups)

- Observed use of designated spaces containing special materials
- Observed use of work center
- Reading “rug”

Instructional Strategies

Higher-order Instructional Feedback (written or verbal)

- Providing answers and information relative to progress in learning
- Goes beyond “correct” or “incorrect”
- Gives explanation, new information

Integration of Subject Areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units)

- Often occurs in thematic units/ project-based learning or oriented to a guiding question that is ongoing and tangible to students
- Instructional activities should meet major objectives for each discipline



Project-based Learning [RSCA] (Examples: Application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation)

- An inquiry or question guides the production of authentic work
- Key factors:
 - Planned
 - Long-term
 - Tangible products
 - Culminating performance/product

Higher-Level Questioning Strategies [RSCA]

- Goes beyond factual information
- Asks students to explain “Why...” “What would happen if ...”

Teacher Acting as Coach/Facilitator

- Academic Focus
- Role is supportive but more than motivational only
- Occurs during student-centered activity

Parent/Community Involvement in Learning Activities

- Parents are in the observed classroom
- Parents support learning, not just observe

Student Activities

Independent Seat Work

(self-paced worksheets, individual assignments)

- Students independently using worksheets or textbook problems to practice content
- Could include practice test, but not actual test

Experiential, Hands-on Learning [RSCA]

- Engagement through concrete experiences
- May involve manipulatives, or other hands-on resources
- Many involve students engaged in computer- or non-computer-based simulations

Systematic Individual Instruction (differential assignments

geared to individual needs)

- Modification of assignment according to individual’s needs or interests
- Computer instruction selected by the teacher adaptively for the individual
- Computer instruction that adapts the lesson presented to student needs



Sustained Writing (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)

- Teacher or self-selected topics for stories, themes, extended responses to a question or prompt

Sustained Reading (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)

- Students individually reading a story or reference book
- Purpose is “open” reading, not to find answers to objective questions

Independent Inquiry/Research [RSCA] on the Part of Students

- Independent work to gather facts or answers to questions for purpose of sharing
- More sustained process than using a textbook
- Can be in a group setting

Student Discussion [RSCA]

- Student talk beyond response to teacher questions
- Typically planned, must be prompted

Technology Use

Computer for Instructional Delivery (e.g., CAI, drill and practice)

- Computers support or present the instruction
- Teacher or students may be using

Technology as a Learning Tool [RSCA] or Resource

- Used by students - e.g. Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, production of word processed reports

Assessment

Performance Assessment Strategies

- Observed demonstration of knowledge
- Examples: Portfolios, charts of progress
- Must involve a formal assessment (rubric or rating scale)



Student Self-Assessment (portfolios, individual record books)

- Guided reflections about learning
- Feedback is not by self-scoring or computer



Summary Items

High Academically-Focused Class Time

- Estimate of time typical student spends in educationally relevant activity

High Level of Student Attention, Interest, Engagement

- Overall estimate of student attention

RSCA [1-4] (Student Centered Activities)

- ☐ Cooperative Learning
- ☐ Project-Based Learning
- ☐ Higher-Level Questioning
- ☐ Experiential, Hands-on Learning
- ☐ Independent Inquiry/Research
- ☐ Student Discussion
- ☐ Technology as a Learning Tool

OVER CODING ALERT



Use a separate sheet for additional not

Appendix B

School Observation Measure (SOM[®]) Data Summary



DIRECTIONS

USE NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY

MAKE DARK MARKS

EX ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHANGE

School Observation Measure (SOM) Data Summary

S.M. Ross, L.J. Smith & M.J. Alberg

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School Name _____ Observer Name: _____

Date of Observation: _____ SOM # _____ Observer Role/Affiliation: _____

Number of classroom observations comprising this SOM. _____

Directions: Use your class-specific notes to reflect upon the extent to which each of the following is present in the school:

Instructional Orientation

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Direct instruction (lecture)	0	1	2	3	4
Team teaching	0	1	2	3	4
Cooperative/collaborative learning	0	1	2	3	4
Individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)	0	1	2	3	4

Classroom Organization

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Ability groups	0	1	2	3	4
Multi-age grouping	0	1	2	3	4
Work centers (for individuals or groups)	0	1	2	3	4

Instructional Strategies

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Higher level instructional feedback (written or verbal) to enhance student learning	0	1	2	3	4
Integration of subject areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units)	0	1	2	3	4
Project-based learning	0	1	2	3	4
Use of higher-level questioning strategies	0	1	2	3	4
Teacher acting as a coach/facilitator	0	1	2	3	4
Parent/community involvement in learning activities	0	1	2	3	4

Student Activities

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Independent seatwork (self-paced worksheets, individual assignments)	0	1	2	3	4
Experiential, hands-on learning	0	1	2	3	4
Systematic individual instruction (differential assignments geared to individual needs)	0	1	2	3	4
Sustained writing/composition (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)	0	1	2	3	4
Sustained reading	0	1	2	3	4
Independent inquiry/research on the part of students	0	1	2	3	4
Student discussion	0	1	2	3	4

Technology Use

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Computer for instructional delivery (e.g. CAI, drill & practice)	0	1	2	3	4
Technology as a learning tool or resource (e.g. Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, multi-media, CD Rom, Laser disk)	0	1	2	3	4

Assessment

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
Performance assessment strategies	0	1	2	3	4
Student self-assessment (portfolios, individual record books)	0	1	2	3	4

Summary Items

	0 - Not observed	1 - Rarely	2 - Occasionally	3 - Frequently	4 - Extensively
High academically focused class time	0	1	2	3	4
High level of student attention/interest/engagement	0	1	2	3	4

Rubric for SOM Scoring

- (0) **Not Observed:** Strategy was never observed.
- (1) **Rarely:** Observed in only one or two classes. Receives isolated use and/or little time in classes. Clearly not a prevalent/emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes.
- (2) **Occasionally:** Observed in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis in classes. Not a prevalent/emphasized component of teaching and learning across classes.
- (3) **Frequently:** Observed in many but not all classes. Receives substantive time or emphasis in classes. A prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes.
- (4) **Extensively:** Observed in most or all classes. Receives substantive time and/or emphasis in classes. A highly prevalent component of teaching and learning across classes.

Appendix C

Sample Introductory Letter to Teachers



Dear Teacher:

I am _____ from _____.

I am observing your class as part of your school's evaluation of its school-wide programs. I will be visiting different classes in the school, for about 15 minutes each, to obtain an impression of the types of teaching and class activities that take place.

You are NOT being evaluated as an individual teacher, and, your name or individual classroom observation data will NOT be identified in any report. Reporting will be done only on a whole-school basis.

It may be helpful for me to talk with you briefly today if I have any questions about what I have observed. If so, I will try to determine when you might have a few minutes of free time.

Thank you for allowing me to visit your classroom.


Appendix D

“SOM”ary of Terms



“SOM”ary of Terms


■ Instructional Orientation

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Direct Instruction (lecture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher controlled • Entire class or small group • Academic focus • Can be lecture format • Can be questioning-type format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving instructions on how to complete assignments • Describing lesson activities • Overseeing student seatwork • Presentation or discussion of non-academic topics (e.g., student behavior, sports)
Team Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one teacher • If teacher assistant (or non-certified individual), must be in teaching role • Certified teachers do not have to teach simultaneously, but both must be present and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent observing the class • Teacher aide grading papers at desk • Volunteer monitoring student behavior
Cooperative/Collaborative Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups interacting • Partner reading • Emphasis (time) is the orientation, not quality • Learning to cooperate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students talking together but not working on a group product or on an explicitly cooperative task • Students organized into groups but working independently • When conditions for cooperative learning (i.e., room arrangement) are in place, but cooperative learning is not observed within the time interval for that classroom visit
Individual Tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer)  Over-Coding Alert!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive 1:1 help • Planned context • Tutor and tutee roles clearly pre-established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher who takes extra time to sit and help a student during the time that he is facilitating or coaching students as they complete independent assignments • Students working in pairs to complete math problems

Classroom Organization

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Ability Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differentiated, within classroom, instruction based on performance level Note details from teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A group of students working on different parts of an assignment Students grouped by categories other than ability (e.g., gender)
Multi-age/Multi-grade Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note details from teacher or principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When in a high school, as most classes are likely to be multiage to some degree (unless your evaluation specifies that high school classes should be marked as multi-grade)
Work Centers (for individuals or groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed use of designated spaces containing special materials Observed use of work center Reading "rug" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer use, unless the computers are located together in a designated center If the centers are not used or integrated into the teaching during the observation

Instructional Strategies

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Higher-order Instructional Feedback (written or verbal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing answers and information relative to progress in learning Goes beyond "correct" or "incorrect" Gives explanation, new information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivational comments such as "Good Work," "Great handwriting" Short responses such as, "Your answer is complete," "That is incorrect, do it again."
Integration of Subject Areas (interdisciplinary/thematic units) <div>  Over-Coding Alert! </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often occurs in thematic units/project-based learning or oriented to a guiding question that is ongoing and tangible to students Instructional activities should meet major objectives for each discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Casual references to multiple subjects during a lecture, e.g., "notice the graph of opinions in today's newspaper" Writing exercises in non-language arts classes - when writing skills are not being taught
Project-based Learning Examples: Application, analysis, synthesis, or evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inquiry or question guides the production of authentic work Key factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned Tangible products Culminating performance/product Long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students working on activities that are related to the current lesson rather than a long-term project


■ Instructional Strategies (Continued)

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Higher-Level Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes beyond factual information • Asks students to explain "why..." "what would happen if..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When questions solicit factual responses such as names, definitions, or correct answers to math problems • When higher-level feedback is given but higher-level questions are not asked
Teacher Acting as Coach/Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Focus • Role is supportive but more than motivational only • Occurs during student-centered activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-academic comments such as "You are working well today," "Sit up straight" • Short responses that do not assist in promoting learning, such as, "That sentence is written correctly," "Great job using the microscope."
Parent/Community Involvement in Learning Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are in the observed classroom • Parents support learning, not just observe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent who is observing the class • Parents decorating a table for the monthly class birthday party

■ Student Activities

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Independent Seat Work (self-paced worksheets, individual assignments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students independently using worksheets or textbook problems to practice content • Could include practice test, but not actual test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using hands-on manipulatives - engaged in independent inquiry or research - working on the computer - writing a paper or in their journals - reading a book other than their textbook, e.g., novel or story
Experiential, Hands-on Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement through concrete experiences • May involve manipulatives or other hands-on resources • May involve students engaged in computer- or non-computer-based simulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are watching the teacher demonstrate the use of science equipment • If students are completing activity worksheets



■ Student Activities (Continued)

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Systematic Individual Instruction (differential assignments geared to individual needs)  Over-Coding Alert!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of assignment according to an individual's needs or interests • Computer instruction selected by the teacher adaptively for the individual • Computer instruction that adapts the lesson presented to student needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If teacher is providing unplanned academic assistance by being a facilitator/coach • If students are completing assignments based on ability grouping
Sustained Writing (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher or self-selected topics for stories, themes, extended responses to a question or prompt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are copying reference information or writing short answers to a test • If students are writing a sentence for each vocabulary word • If the writing is in connection to the regular textbook or worksheets
Sustained Reading (self-selected or teacher-generated topics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students individually reading a story or reference book • Purpose is "open" reading, not to find answers to objective questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading the regular textbook • Reading story excerpts printed on a worksheet with questions
Independent Inquiry/Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent work to gather facts or answers to questions for purpose of sharing • More sustained process than using a textbook • Can be in a group setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searching for information in the textbook • Collecting specific information from teacher-provided resources or Internet sites
Student Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student talk beyond response to teacher questions • Typically planned, must be prompted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social or informal discussion • Students providing responses to teacher questions

Technology Use

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Computer for Instructional Delivery (e.g. CAI, drill and practice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computers support or present the instruction Teacher or students may be using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of traditional technology such as overhead projectors or audio or video cassette players If students are using basic computer applications to produce products, such as a word-processed report, a spreadsheet graph, or creating a PowerPoint® presentation (these should be coded as "Technology as a Learning Tool or Resource")
Technology as a Learning Tool or Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used by students - e.g. Internet research, spreadsheet or database creation, production of word processed reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of computers for drill and practice activities Use of computer to present information - these should be coded as "Computer for Instructional Delivery"

Assessment

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	DO NOT CODE
Performance Assessment Strategies  Over-Coding Alert!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observed demonstration of knowledge Examples: Portfolios, charts of progress Must involve a formal assessment (rubric or rating scale) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students simply placing graded papers in a file Students placing homework problems on the board while the teacher leads a discussion of how to solve the problems
Student Self-Assessment (portfolios, individual record books)  Over-Coding Alert!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guided reflections about learning Feedback is <i>not</i> by self-scoring or computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simply obtaining test feedback by self-scoring or by a computer program Students grading each other's papers

■ Summary Items

TERMS	WHAT TO CODE	NOTE
High Academically Focused Class Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estimate of time typical student spends in educationally relevant activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The assessment of student attention, interest, and/or engagement should be rated independently of academic focus. It is possible for a class to have a high level of academically focused class time (e.g., the teacher is lecturing on academic content) while the level of student attention is very low (e.g., many students appear to be sleeping). Or, conversely, all students may be actively engaged in an activity with little or no academic focus (e.g., a pizza party)
High Level of Student Attention, Interest, Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall estimate of student attention	