How to Assess Professional Practice: Looking Beyond the Classroom

A comprehensive evaluation of teacher effectiveness includes looking beyond the classroom. Below are three sets of indicators to help you with your assessment of the teacher’s commitment to professional practice, the school community, and professionalism. Use the four-point rubric within each set to assess the teacher’s commitment to professional practice.

### Commitment to Professional Practice

- **10.1 Self-assesses and works to improve classroom practice**
- **10.2 Develops and implements a professional growth plan**
- **10.3 Seeks out professional development and continuous learning opportunities**
- **10.4 Works with colleagues to improve practice throughout the school**

### Commitment to the School Community

- **10.5 Maintains open communication with the entire school community**
- **10.6 Assumes appropriate leadership roles**
- **10.7 Maintains and builds a positive school culture**

### Commitment to Professionalism

- **10.8 Adheres to a high level of professionalism at all times**
- **10.9 Adheres to legal responsibilities and current educational policies**

How to Develop a Comprehensive Evaluation Using Multiple Measures

The best and most reliable evaluations of teacher effectiveness are based on multiple measures. Based on your school’s or district’s plan, decide how much each measure will be weighted by assigning it a percentage value. (Note: Total weighting should equal 100%)

| I. Instructional Practice (Dimensions 1-8) | x % |
| II. Professional Practice (Dimensions 9-10) | x % |
| III. Student Performance Data | x % |
| A. Standardized Test Data | x % |
| B. Other Assessments | x % |
| C. Other | x % |
| IV. Student Feedback/Surveys | x % |
| V. Other Measure | x % |
| TOTAL | 100% |

**References**


**TECHIE: Q5**  [Link to Website]

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**The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework**

**Overview**

The Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework is a comprehensive system for observing, evaluating, and refining classroom practice. It synthesizes a wide body of research on instructional design and teacher effectiveness, as well as insight from over 250 teachers and administrators around the country.

The ultimate goal of the Framework is to create a common language for talking about high-quality teaching and how classroom practice can be improved. The Framework allows for assessment according to ten dimensions of teaching, outlining a set of observable teaching indicators within each dimension and relevant student behaviors associated with effective instruction. It also includes rubrics for developing summative evaluations, along with a set of protocols to help school leaders provide meaningful feedback to teachers and conduct powerful pre- and post-observation conferences.

### What Are the Components of Effective Teaching?

Research and experience prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that classroom instruction has far more impact on student learning than any other factor. A study of the world’s top 25 school systems puts it this way: “The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction” (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). This is why two of the three Framework components focus directly on classroom instruction.

**Four Cornerstones of Effective Teaching**

A. **A Culture of Thinking and Learning**

B. **Deepening and Reinforcing Learning**

C. **Organization, Rules, and Procedures**

D. **Positive Relationships**

These four cornerstones represent the universal elements of quality instruction, whether in a kindergarten class, an AP Physics lab, or anywhere in between. Without these four cornerstones in place, student learning will be compromised.

**Comprehensive One**

**COMPONENT ONE**

Deepening and Reinforcing Learning

### Preparing Students for New Learning

### Presenting New Learning

### Applying Learning

### Reflecting on and Celebrating Learning

**COMPONENT TWO**

A Culture of Thinking and Learning

### Engaging and Enjoyment

Understanding these five episodes—and their driving purposes—is critical for both the teacher and the observer. Teachers use these episodes to design high-quality lessons and units. For classroom observations, these five episodes immediately orient the observer within the instructional sequence, ensuring that teachers and observers are on the same page.

**COMPONENT THREE**

Looking Beyond the Classroom

**Effective Professional Practice (Dimension 10)**

The Framework also includes a tenth dimension focused on professional practice, which addresses important non-instructional responsibilities, including the teacher’s commitment to ongoing professionalism, and the school community.

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**THE THOUGHTFUL CLASSROOM**

**TECHIE: Q6**  [Link to Website]
How to Collect Evidence through Observation

I. Preparing for the Observation:
1. Determine what kind of observation you will be conducting.
   A. Formal observation is announced, lasts for an extended period of time, and usually involves a pre- and post-observation meeting between the teacher and the observer (see the green pre- and post-observation panels below and to the right).
   B. Informal observations are typically shorter in duration than formal observations, may be unannounced, and should happen regularly throughout the year.

2. Review the nine dimensions and instructional indicators to decide which ones you will focus on for your observation.
3. Select the appropriate online template or paper form for your observation.
4. Use these simple marks to help you collect information about the teacher’s instructional practice:
   - Evident: Place a check mark in the box.
   - Not Evident: Leave the box blank.
   - Missed Opportunity: Circle the box.

5. Look for student behaviors that are signs of effective instruction during your observation.
6. Collect notes to support your observation and develop meaningful feedback (see gray feedback panel to the right).

II. Classroom Observation
1. How does the teacher maintain control and establish rules and procedures that clarify expectations?
2. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Organizes the classroom for safety and learning
   - 2. Establishes classroom rules and procedures
   - 3. Provides clear directions
   - 4. Manages non-instructional tasks efficiently

III. Collecting Evaluation Tools
1. What are your learning goals for the lesson to be observed?
2. Teacher to identify and establish the learning goals.
3. Collect notes to support your observation and to assess the overall effectiveness of a lesson.

IV. Learning Activities:
1. What instructional activities will you use to achieve your learning goals?
2. Four-Point Assessment Rubric (see panel for description)∗
   - 1. Novice
   - 2. Developing
   - 3. Proficient
   - 4. Expert

V. Preparing Students for New Learning
1. How will the teacher prepare students for new learning?
2. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Selects appropriate standards
   - 2. Corporealizes learning goals/targets
   - 3. Engages students in meaningful and challenging activities
   - 4. Improves students’ background knowledge, skills, and interests
   - 5. Clarifies expectations for products and performances
   - 6. Encourages students to develop personal goals

VI. Presenting New Learning
1. How does the teacher present new information and provide opportunities for students to actively engage with content?
2. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Organizes content into meaningful chunks
   - 2. Uses a variety of resources
   - 3. Encourages discussion, classroom talk, and think-alouds
   - 4. Demonstrates high-quality communication skills
   - 5. Encourages students to reflect on their learning
   - 6. Encourages students to share their thinking and provide feedback to one another
   - 7. Establishes rules for classroom behavior
   - 8. Helps students engage in productive conversations

VII. Deepening and Reinforcing Learning
1. How does the teacher help students solidify their understanding and practice new skills?
2. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Identifies critical clarifications and has students assess progress
   - 2. Determining and narrowing the focus
   - 3. Conducts periodic review and practice sessions
   - 4. Provides descriptive feedback
   - 5. Encourages self-assessment
   - 6. Uses a variety of resources
   - 7. Provides opportunities to process learning deeply
   - 8. Assigns homework

VIII. Impact on Student Learning—Sample Student Behaviors
1. How effective are these instructional activities in helping students learn?
2. Four-Point Assessment Rubric (see panel for description)∗
   - 1. Novice
   - 2. Developing
   - 3. Proficient
   - 4. Expert

IX. Assessing Student Learning: How do you assess student understanding?
1. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Learns from students’ mistakes
   - 2. Uses multiple forms of information/media
   - 3. Encourages students to look back and develop new insights
   - 4. Provides opportunities to reflect on their learning
   - 5. Helps students review and address unmet goals
   - 6. Helps students set future performance goals

X. Revising the Teaching Strategy
1. How does that work fit with the overall learning goals for the lesson?
2. Impact on Student Learning—Sample Student Behaviors
   - 1. Novice
   - 2. Developing
   - 3. Proficient
   - 4. Expert

XI. Engaging and Enjoyment
1. How does the teacher motivate students to do their best work and inspire the love of learning?
2. Instructional Indicators (Formative Observation)∗
   - 1. Provides a variety of resources
   - 2. Encourages students to take risks
   - 3. Provides opportunities to share their thinking and provide feedback to one another
   - 4. Establishes rules for classroom behavior
   - 5. Helps students engage in productive conversations

XII. How to Assess a Teacher’s Effectiveness Using a Four-Point Rubric

In this context, four-point rubrics can offer a quick way to evaluate a teacher’s impact on student learning. They can be used to establish goals and to assess how well the goals are being met. Rubrics are useful tools for teachers because they can be used to set expectations, monitor progress, and assess student learning. They can also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and to identify areas for improvement. Rubrics can be used at different levels of instruction and can be adapted to meet the needs of different learners. They can be used to assess individual student progress or to evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson or a unit of instruction. They can also be used to provide feedback to teachers on their instructional practices and to identify areas for improvement. Rubrics can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and to identify areas for improvement. Rubrics can be used at different levels of instruction and can be adapted to meet the needs of different learners. They can be used to assess individual student progress or to evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson or a unit of instruction. They can also be used to provide feedback to teachers on their instructional practices and to identify areas for improvement.