

TEAM Observation Guidance Documents: Cover Sheet

BACKGROUND

Certain subgroups of educators, which are listed in the table below, operate in unique situations that may require additional attention to apply the TEAM evaluation model with fidelity and provide educators with meaningful feedback. As such, we have conducted numerous focus groups, with educators working in these areas, to develop additional guidance to support evaluation. The accompanying documents are meant to serve as an instructive, although not exhaustive, list of areas to which administrators should direct additional attention based on the unique instructional or service setting of the educator. These are meant to supplement, not replace, the TEAM evaluation rubric. Together, the pre-observation questions, key areas for gathering evidence, examples of evidence and artifacts, and examples of excellence present an evaluator with additional resources to use to conduct high-quality evaluations.

COMPONENTS

The accompanying documents for each educator group are broken down into two components.

1. The *Observation Guidance* document provides:

- a quick glance at some guiding questions and overarching concerns for each educator group; and
- examples of pre-observation questions, key areas to focus evidence gathering, and examples of appropriate evidence/artifacts the evaluator may collect.
 - NOTE: Key areas for evidence are not intended to replace the indicators in the TEAM evaluation model, but rather are more detailed guidelines for evaluating indicators that educators have identified as particularly tricky to observe.

2. The *Observation Support* document provides:

- additional context for the evaluator when considering the responsibilities of each educator,
- detailed examples to illuminate some of the key indicators and areas for evidence, and
- a platform for meaningful discussion between educators and evaluators around best practices.
 - NOTE: This can be especially useful for structuring pre-conference discussions.

Available observation guidance documents include:

GENERAL EDUCATOR RUBRIC	SCHOOL SERVICES PERSONNEL RUBRIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Educators • College, Career and Technical Educators (CCTE) • Early Childhood Educators • Pre-K Educators • Early Literacy K-3 Educators • Gifted Educators • Interventionists • Online Educators • Special Educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Audiologists • School Counselors • School Psychologists • School Social Workers • Speech/Language Pathologists (SLP) • Vision Specialists

TEAM Observation Guidance: Gifted Educators

PRE-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. What are the unique circumstances in the classroom setting where you will be observed? (e.g., shared space, recently qualified students, co-teaching, etc.)
2. How do you access and use challenging resources to match the individual strengths of students?
3. How do you determine which state standard (on or above level) to choose?
4. How does the pre-assessment chosen allow for accelerating and compacting of content?
5. How do you develop an environment and instructional activities that encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness?
6. How do you support differentiated curricula that incorporates advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content for gifted students?
7. How do you respond to the varied learning needs of the students (including pacing)?
8. How do you provide opportunities for interaction with intellectual and creative peers as well as chronological-age peers?
9. How do you decide which grouping practice would be best in different learning environments?
10. How do you use local, state, and national standards and assessment data to align and expand curriculum and instructional plans?
11. How do you determine what is meaningful and challenging?
12. What intellectually rigorous instructional outcomes have you identified for the students in the class?

KEY AREAS FOR EVIDENCE

1. **Instruction—Standards and Objectives**
 - The core curriculum is adapted, modified, or replaced to meet the needs of advanced learners.
 - There is evidence of knowledge of standards at multiple grade levels to advance the student when the student is ready.
2. **Instruction—Lesson Structure and Pacing**
 - Lessons and pacing are structured to provide opportunities for compacting and acceleration.
3. **Instruction—Activities and Materials**
 - Opportunities are provided for advanced students to explore, develop, or research their areas of interest.
 - Activities are meaningful and challenging.
4. **Instruction—Grouping Students**
 - Grouping practices are varied, allowing for interaction with intellectual peers.
 - Grouping practices are varied, allowing for interaction with creative peers.
 - Small class size might impact grouping options.
5. **Planning—Teacher Knowledge of Students**
 - Teacher practices reflect knowledge of characteristics of students who are gifted.
 - Student interests are used to help motivate and engage students during the lesson.
6. **Instruction—Instructional Plans**
 - Local, state, and national gifted standards are used to align and expand curriculum and instructional plans.
 - There is evidence of differentiated curricula that incorporate advanced, conceptually challenging, in-depth, distinctive, and complex content for students with gifts and talents.

<p>7. Environment—Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher provides feedback that focuses on effort, on evidence of potential to meet high standards, and on mistakes as learning opportunities. • Expectations are set that require students to take responsibility for their work and initiate improvements. 	
<p>8. Environment—Managing Student Behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher understands the needs of advanced students for both solitude and social interaction. • Instruction is provided when appropriate on affective skills needed for school, community engagement, and work. 	
<p>9. Environment—Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher may not have dedicated classroom, so displaying student work may not be expected. • Supplies, equipment, and resources might be limited if space is shared or the teacher is itinerant. 	
<p>10. Environment—Respectful Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment supports trust among diverse learners. • The teacher recognizes the challenges that gifted students face. • The environment and instructional activities encourage students to express diverse characteristics and behaviors that are associated with giftedness. 	
EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE/ARTIFACTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student work products • Conversations with students • Daily assignment sheets, journals, and notebooks • Student assessments • Student projects • Checklists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student learning plans or learning contracts • Lesson objectives/standards • Instructional plans

TEAM Observation Support: Gifted Educators

The evaluator may need to look more broadly at the gifted educator than other educators delivering instruction, as the gifted educator is tasked with supporting student learning outside the core instructional setting and may need to be adapted within the framework of the individual student's IEP. Advanced programs and routines may vary at each school, and as such, the pace and structure of instruction may differ.

I. INSTRUCTION

EXAMPLE—STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

Instruction—Standards and Objectives:

The gifted educator instructs students based on their areas of strength and reaches beyond grade-level standards when appropriate. National Gifted Standards are combined with state-level content standards to add depth and complexity to content standards. Since these learners can take information beyond the state standards, flexibility should be given for students to continue reaching past a predetermined outcome. In other words, lessons are designed to push students beyond a minimum and allow continued student growth. Sometimes, the learning objectives are ongoing and not restrained to a single observation.

EXAMPLE—ACADEMIC FEEDBACK

Instruction—Academic Feedback:

Students are engaged in an activity where they are sorting shapes by size and type. The educator asks students individually to explain what they are doing. Appropriate student responses reflect understanding of the task at hand and the reasoning behind it. The educator has one-on-one conversations about the work and provides specific feedback as needed to guide students (e.g., "You counted the sides to decide if this was a triangle," "I think you missed a side when you were counting. Let's try again," "...not, "Good job!"). Students making errors are encouraged through feedback and questioning to correct mistakes (e.g., "This object looks smaller than the others. How could you fix this problem? Where would it go? You might compare the objects side-by-side to decide which ones are the same."). The educator has a plan in place to document responses and approaches to the learning activity.

EXAMPLE—LESSON STRUCTURE AND PACING

Instruction—Lesson Structure and Pacing:

Throughout the instructional time, the gifted educator maintains a flexible schedule that allows him/her to address learning in the moment, compact and add to the lesson, or accelerate the content due to the faster learning pace of the gifted learner. This may seem as if the lesson is off topic, but the instructor is responding to the characteristics of the learner who is gifted.

EXAMPLE—ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS

Instruction—Activities and Materials:

The teacher of advanced students chooses activities and materials that encourage higher order thinking, creative thinking, and provide challenging learning opportunities. Activities and/or materials might appear off topic from the standard, but might be addressing an interest area of need of one of the students in the class. Many teachers of advanced students travel between schools, have no storage space on site, and must bring all lesson materials with them.

EXAMPLE—GROUPING STUDENTS

Instruction—Grouping Students:

Throughout instruction time, grouping is purposeful. There might be a single grouping observed in an observation or multiple groupings. Gifted students work best with intellectual peers. For example: a first grader reading on a fourth grade level should be grouped with other students on the same reading level not just the same chronological age. The instructor should understand the reasoning behind why they choose the grouping they did and know how that grouping will benefit an advanced student in that specific learning environment.

EXAMPLE—TEACHER KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS

Instruction—Teacher Knowledge of Students:

The teacher knows that gifted students sometimes need solitude and is accepting of that trait. The instructor is also aware that sometimes there is a need for practice and accommodating of current level of social skills. The teachers planning and addressing of student needs might not be visually evident and should be asked about. For example: An advanced student has a high anxiety level. The teacher has conferenced and role played with them. Together it was decided that the student could get up and take up to two drinks of water from the fountain in the room without asking for permission. An evaluator would not know that is a signal from the student to the teacher.

EXAMPLE—INSTRUCTIONAL PLANS

Instruction—Instructional Plans:

The plans of a teacher of advanced students should include appropriate learning and performance modifications that enhance creativity, acceleration, depth and complexity in academic subject matter, and/or specialized domains. Resources, such as the National Association for Gifted Children, provide standards that can be implemented to grow thinking in advanced students. Curriculums should be chosen that are designed and written specifically for the advanced student's learning needs. Plans should also include differentiation for the different levels of students within the advanced classroom.

EXAMPLE—ENVIRONMENT AND RESPECTFUL CULTURE

Instruction—Environment and Respectful Culture:

The teacher of advanced students creates an environment that is accepting of all types of gifted learners and their unique needs. The teacher also collaborates with others in the school environment to minimize passive aggressive comments or actions directed toward advanced learners (e.g., "That kid doesn't deserve to have enrichment"; "Please take this other student instead"). The teacher collaborates to ensure advanced work is not "in-addition to" it is instead "in-place of".