

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH SYSTEM
**SPECIAL EDUCATION
GROWTH RUBRIC**
Observation and Feedback Guidebook



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EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

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NOTES

INTRODUCTION

How the Professional Growth System Connects to Our Broader Goals

The Mississippi State Board of Education’s Strategic Plan outlines clear goals for advancing public education in the State of Mississippi. Goal 4 of the strategic plan specifically addresses teacher and leader effectiveness by ensuring that “every school has effective teachers and leaders.”

VISION: To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and workforce and to flourish as parents and citizens

MISSION: To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

GOALS

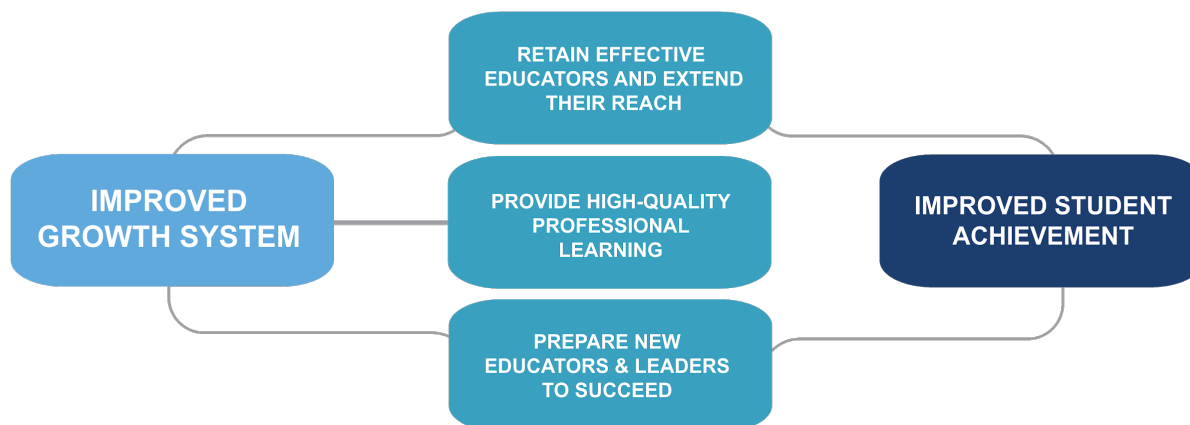
1. All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child has access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated “C” or Higher

Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric

Research shows that within schools, special education teachers provide services to students with disabilities that are specifically designed to support student learning. In their critical role, special education teachers need feedback and high-quality learning experiences to continuously improve their practice and student learning. This feedback and support should be based on a shared understanding and ongoing support of best practice.

With input from hundreds of educators, a statewide team of teachers and leaders designed the Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System (PGS) to help ensure that special education teachers receive the high-quality feedback necessary to support the growth they must maintain. This system is also intended to provide districts and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) with data to strengthen decision-making to ensure that special education teachers are better prepared, supported, and retained to improve reading and learning for all students.

Professional Growth System Goals



The following are the goals of the Professional Growth System:

- Provide a shared vision for high-quality teaching and learning and guide special education teachers in improving their practice
- Encourage regular, evidence-based observation and feedback for all special education teachers
- Support special education teachers and school leaders in identifying priorities for strengthening practice
- Serve as a guide for special education teachers as they reflect upon their own practices

Special Education Teacher and Principal/Observer Responsibilities

Special Education Teacher Responsibilities:

- Know and understand the Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric domains, standards, and indicators
- Understand the observation process
- Prepare for and fully participate in each component of the observation process
- Develop strategies to improve practice in areas individually or collaboratively identified
- Implement strategies to improve practice in areas individually or collaboratively identified

Principal/Observer Responsibilities:

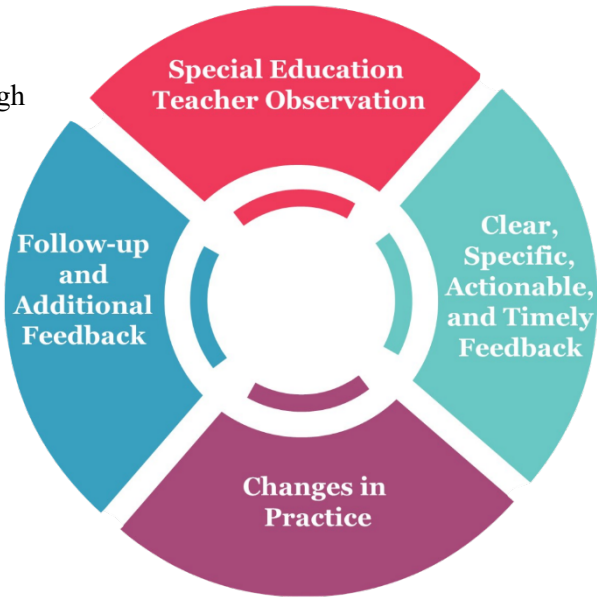
- Complete the MDE's observer training to understand and implement the Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric with fidelity and consistency
- Know and understand the Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric domains, standards, and indicators
- Supervise the observation process and ensure that all steps are conducted according to the process
- Identify the special education teacher's strengths and areas for growth and provide specific, actionable feedback for improving practice
- Ensure that the Summative Observation Rating accurately reflects practice

Observers

Local school districts have the discretion to designate administrators and educators to perform observations within their school district. All observations and feedback conversations must be performed by licensed educators or administrators who have successfully completed all MDE training requirements.

The Observation and Feedback Cycle

The purpose of the PGS is to support all educators in strengthening practice. This purpose is achieved through the cycle of observations, feedback, adjustments in practice, and follow-up to support the growth of special education teachers. The Observation and Feedback Cycle will ensure that special education teachers receive regular observations to provide accurate and meaningful feedback. Each observation should be followed by clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback to improve practice. Observers should follow up to ensure feedback is effectively implemented and to provide additional assistance if necessary. This cycle provides special education teachers with continuous feedback.



The Observation and Feedback Process



The Observation and Feedback Process is not a mystery. This is the four-step process for collecting evidence to support feedback conversations. These steps should be followed when observing librarians. This process represents best practice and is not intended to be burdensome but provide observers with a clear process to make identifying high-quality feedback easier. As observers gain experience and expertise with the Librarian Growth Rubric, collecting and sorting evidence can be done simultaneously.

Observations and Feedback Conversations

Special Education Teacher Observation

Special Education Teacher observations provide a view of practice and the opportunity to collect evidence to assess practice using the Growth Rubric. Archer, Cantrell, Holtzman Jow, Tocci, & Wood (2016) wrote:

Evidence is the basis of fair evaluation and meaningful feedback. Evidence is what grounds agreement on the quality of practice, as well as the conversation about how to improve. When an observer calls attention to specific actions that took place..., it demystifies the reasons why a specific performance rating is warranted and provides a clear starting point for discussing how to implement changes. A piece of evidence is an objective description of something observed [during observation]. It makes no suggestion of quality (p. 128).¹

Special education teacher observations serve as a snapshot of practice captured through watching and providing feedback on what is observed. Observations, both informal and formal, should be of sufficient length so that the observer can analyze the activity or task and accurately collect evidence. Time between observations must be sufficient for educators to improve their practice using the action steps identified during the feedback conversation. If the educator needs support(s) to improve his/her practice (i.e., coaching and professional learning opportunities), then the time between observations must be sufficient for the special education teacher to have had the opportunity to access appropriate supports.



High-quality feedback after each observation.

Informal/Walk-through Observations

Research clearly indicates that adults, including educators, need regular feedback to strengthen practice. Informal observations/walk-throughs are unannounced library observations that support the collection of evidence to provide high-quality feedback to educators about specific tasks. One of the important findings of the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) Project sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was that 15-minute observations were as effective as observations of 45 minutes.² The informal/walk-through observations should occur throughout the school year. Two informal observations are required. Beyond the required two, the frequency and length of time of the informal/walk-through observations are at the discretion of the school district. While two is a minimum requirement, more frequent informal observations may be needed to strengthen a librarian's practice. A single informal observation does not need to assess every aspect of an educator's practice, but observers should use the rubric to identify potential areas for feedback.

¹ Archer, J., Cantrell, S., Holtzman, S. L., Joe, J. N., Tocci, C. M., & Wood, J. (2016). *Better feedback for better teaching: a practical guide to improving classroom observations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand.

² Ho, A. D., & Kane, T. J. (2013, January). *The reliability of classroom observations by school personnel (Rep.)*. Retrieved February 2017, from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation website: k12education.gatesfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/MET_Reliability-of-Classroom-Observations_Research-Paper.pdf.

Formal Observations

Formal observations should be announced. Each educator should receive a minimum of one formal observation per school year. Beyond the required one, the frequency and length of the formal observations are at the discretion of the school district.

Pre-observation Conferences

Pre-observation conferences provide the opportunity for the educator to describe the context of the lesson that will be observed during the formal observation. Pre-observation conferences are not required but are useful in building shared trust with the observation process.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What roles do various team members play in the collection, interpretation, and communication of assessment results?
- What types of accommodations/modifications to instruction can be provided without affecting the implementation fidelity of interventions currently in use?
- What are some critical components of delivering effective feedback?
- How do you support students' generalization of skills across a variety of settings?
- How might you approach “unpacking”/deconstructing a broader standard into specific learning targets?
- What does it mean to systematically design instruction? Why is it critical to do this?
- In what ways can instruction, tasks, and materials be differentiated to meet students' individual needs? Why is it important to gradually fade adaptations/supports over time?
- How does supporting students in developing cognitive and metacognitive skills support their long-term success with grade-level curricula in inclusive environments?
- Why are scaffolds important to consider when planning how to address long- and short-term learning goals?
- Why is it important to provide students with a clear goal and statement of expectations for each lesson?
- Why is it necessary to explicitly teach students the purpose of using technologies, and how to use it for that reason?

Feedback Conversations

Of all the approaches to promote special education teacher learning, the most powerful (and embedded in virtually all others) is that of professional conversation.³ Reflective conversations about practice allow



³ Danielson, C. (2016). *Talk about teaching!: leading professional conversations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, a Sage Company.

educators to understand and analyze events across learning environments. High-quality feedback helps educators improve by identifying strengths (practices they should continue) and areas for improvement (changes to their practice that should be prioritized). To be effective, feedback after an observation should focus on foundational practices that will have a domino effect on the mastery of other practices (highest leverage), be clear and observable (not vague), and be bite-sized so it can be implemented quickly.¹ Feedback should be provided to the educator as soon as possible after each observation.

Observers should **prioritize a narrow area of focus** to discuss with the special education teacher. A focus area should be narrowed so that the observer and educator can co-plan strategies for implementation that can quickly make a noticeable difference in the learning environment.¹ Educators should always be meaningfully engaged in the feedback conversation and not just recipients of information from the observer. A two-way conversation allows an educator to better understand the relationships between his/her action and student learning or school-wide initiatives. **Reflective prompts** provide a structure for educators to self-analyze their own action and what they might improve.¹

Feedback must include more than prompts crafted to promote self-reflection. The onus for identifying techniques to improve practice should not rest only on the special education teacher. Observers need to bring something to the table. For instance, if the focus of feedback is on writing better collaboration, **the observer should come with a handful of very specific and practical techniques** for doing so. An educator who leaves a post observation conference with something of value is much more likely to view observation in a positive light.¹

Summative Observation Ratings

Using the evidence collected over the course of the school year, the observer should apply the four-performance level rating scale to evaluate a special education teacher's practice using all nine Special Education Growth Rubric standards. Therefore, the summative observation rating represents where the “preponderance of evidence” exists. The summative observation rating is based upon the aggregate, unweighted domain averages. Each standard is assigned a rating of 1.00 through 4.00 points. Domain ratings are calculated by averaging the standards in each domain. These numeric values are then aggregated and divided by four (i.e., the number of domains) to produce a summative observation rating from 1.00 through 4.00 points. Summative observation standard ratings for each educator will be submitted to the MDE. The method of submission and submission window will be provided to districts each year by MDE.

Summative Observation Rating Calculation Example

STANDARDS	4	3	2	1	RATING
Domain I: Lesson Design					
1. Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate), represent a coherent sequence of learning			✓		2
2. Lessons have high levels of learning for all students, as indicated through the general and specialized curriculum to inform instructional decisions for students with disabilities.	✓				4
DOMAIN I RATING (AVERAGE OF STANDARD RATINGS UNDER DOMAIN)					3
Domain II: Student Understanding					
3. The teacher assist students in self-regulation and monitor generalization of learning			✓		2
4. The teacher provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content by using explicit instructional strategies	✓				4
DOMAIN II RATING (AVERAGE OF STANDARD RATINGS UNDER DOMAIN)					3
Domain III: Culture and Learning Environment					
5. The teacher manages a learning-focused classroom community and productive learning environments for students with disabilities			✓		2
6. The teacher manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology, when appropriate) effectively for student learning				✓	1

7. The teacher creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students	✓	3
DOMAIN III RATING (AVERAGE OF STANDARD RATINGS UNDER DOMAIN)		2
Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities		
8. Engages in professional learning and complies with reporting requirements	✓	4
9. Collaborates with families/guardians and professionals	✓	3
DOMAIN IV RATING (AVERAGE OF STANDARD RATINGS UNDER DOMAIN)		3.5
SPECIAL EDUCATION OBSERVATION RATING (AVERAGE OF DOMAIN RATINGS)		2.88

Summative Observation Conferences

Prior to the end of the school year and in accordance with school district timelines, the observer will conduct a summative observation conference with the special education teacher. During the conference, the observer and educator will discuss the educator’s observations, evidence of the educator’s practice, and professional growth opportunities. At this time, the special education teacher should also receive the summative observation rating.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Student Learning Outcome SMART Goals
- Professional development expectations

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER GROWTH RUBRIC DESIGN

DOMAIN

Domain I: Lesson Design

STANDARD

1. Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and represent a coherent sequence of learning

Evidence: Lesson plans, IEPs, PLC Agendas, Progress Monitoring, Assessments, Content Enhancements

Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- 4**
- ✓ are **fully aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and students' long-/short-term learning goals
 - ✓ are part of a coherent sequence of learning with **ample evidence** of identifying prerequisites, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit
 - ✓ reflect collaboration with general education teachers, support staff, **and families**

Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- 3**
- ✓ are **fully aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and students' long-/short-term learning goals
 - ✓ are part of a **coherent sequence** of learning with **ample evidence** of identifying prerequisites, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit
 - ✓ reflect collaboration with general education teachers, and support staff

INDICATORS

Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- 2**
- ✓ are **partially aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) or students' long-/short-term learning goals
 - ✓ are part of a **ineffective sequence** of learning with **limited evidence** of identifying prerequisites, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit

Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- 1**
- ✓ are **not aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) or students' long-/short-term learning goals
 - ✓ are part of a **ineffective sequence** of learning with **limited or no evidence** of identifying prerequisites, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit

Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric Domains and Standards

The Special Education Growth Rubric has four domains and 9 standards.

Domain I: Lesson Design

- 1:** Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and represent a coherent sequence of learning.
- 2:** Lessons have high levels of learning for all students as indicated through general and specialized curriculum to inform instructional decisions for students with disabilities.

Domain II: Student Understanding

- 3:** Assists students in self-regulation and monitors generalization of learning.
- 4:** Provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content by using explicit instructional strategies.

Domain III: Culture and Environment

- 5:** Manages a learning-focused classroom community and productive learning environments for students with disabilities.
- 6:** The teacher manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology, when appropriate) effectively for student learning.
- 7:** Creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students.

Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities

- 8:** Engages in professional learning and complies with reporting requirements.
- 9:** Collaborates with families and professionals.

Special Education Teacher Performance Levels

A special education teacher's practice on each standard will be evaluated in accordance with a four-level rating scale:

- **Level 4 Practice:** This educator demonstrates advanced instructional practices, particularly those that foster student ownership of learning. In Level 4, a strong community of learners has been created in which students assume a large part of the responsibility for the success of a lesson and their own learning. Level 4 practice goes above and beyond the expectations for an effective special education teacher.
- **Level 3 Practice:** This educator demonstrates effective instructional practices. Level 3 is characterized by “teacher-directed success” while Level 4 teaching is characterized by “student-directed success.” Level 3 practices are expected of all effective educators.
- **Level 2 Practice:** A educator demonstrating Level 2 practices is making attempts but does not fully demonstrate effectiveness. This educator has potential to become effective, but requires

clear, specific, and actionable feedback to improve his/her practice. An educator whose practice is at Level 2 is a high potential special education teacher. High-quality feedback is essential in improving his/her practice.

- **Level 1 Practice:** This special education teacher should receive immediate and comprehensive professional learning and support(s) designed to address the identified area(s) for growth.

Descriptors for Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric Performance Levels

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fully ● Effective(ly) ● All ● Appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adequate(ly) ● Most 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inadequate(ly) ● Few ● Limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rarely ● Ineffectively ● Almost no/never ● Does not

Level 4	
Fully	This descriptor means that the educator is enacting the indicator to the furthest extent possible
Consistently	The educator demonstrates that the indicator is enacted at all times in the classroom
Effective(ly)	This descriptor signals that the educator is achieving the desired result at the highest level
Appropriate	This descriptor refers to the high level of suitability of the action the educator takes in the particular circumstances
All	The educator demonstrates that all the students are engaged in instruction and by the services offered
Level 3	
Adequate(ly)	This descriptor means that the educator’s performance is satisfactory, but does not reach the furthest extent possible (level 4)
Most	The educator demonstrates that most of the students are being well served by instruction and by the services offered
Level 2	
Inadequate(ly)	This descriptor means that the indicator is enacted to a very small extent, and not to the degree needed to score level 3
Few	The educator demonstrates that a small number are being well served by instruction and by the services offered
Limited	The educator enacts this indicator to either a very small extent, or in very small amounts, or on very few occasions
Level 1	

Rarely	This descriptor means the educator hardly ever enacts the indicator
Ineffectively	The educator does not produce the desired results
Almost no/never	This descriptor is used to signal that the educator hardly ever enacts the indicator
Does not	This descriptor means the educator does not achieve the desired practice or result

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER GROWTH RUBRIC

DOMAIN I: LESSON DESIGN

Standard 1: Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and represent a coherent sequence of learning

Indicators

4 Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- are **fully aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and students' long-/short-term learning goals
- are part of a coherent sequence of learning **with ample evidence of identifying prerequisites**, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit
- reflect collaboration with general education teachers, support staff, **and families**

3 Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- are **fully aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) **and** students' long-/short-term learning goals
- are part of a **coherent sequence** of learning **with ample evidence of identifying prerequisites**, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit
- reflect collaboration with general education teachers and support staff

2 Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- are **partially aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) **or** students' long-/short-term learning goals
- are part of an **ineffective sequence** of learning **with limited evidence of identifying prerequisites**, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit

1 Lessons include student learning outcomes and instructional activities that:

- are **not aligned** to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) **or** students' long-/short-term learning goals
- are **not part of a coherent sequence** of learning **with limited or no evidence of identifying prerequisites**, adapting curriculum based on student needs, and making connections explicit

Evidence Samples

- Lesson Plans
- IEP (goals/objectives, PLAAFP, progress monitoring)
- PLC Agendas
- Assessments (Summative and Formative)
- Progress Monitoring (pre-test or baseline assessments, benchmark assessment results, behavior/performance checklists, progress charts for classwork and interventions, standardized assessments, discipline record, attendance)
- Content Enhancements (graphic organizers, highlighting materials, simplify directions, visual aids, alter amount of materials, alter the difficulty level of materials, highlight relevant materials, guided notes, mnemonic devices)

DOMAIN I: LESSON DESIGN

Standard 2: Lessons have high levels of learning for all students as indicated through general and specialized curriculum to inform instructional decisions for students with disabilities

Indicators

Lessons provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:

- 4
 - **effective scaffolding**, coaching, and modeling through visual, verbal, and written supports that are gradually removed when no longer needed
 - use of **multiple data sources** to diagnose student strengths and needs in **collaboration with general and special education colleagues**
 - clear **targeted goals** for students in lessons/instruction/services and practice opportunities that align with individual student strengths and needs
 - **differentiation** that empowers students to make **decisions based on IEP goals**
 - **relevant connections** to students' prior knowledge
 - opportunities for students to choose challenging tasks and instructional materials

Lessons provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:

- 3
 - appropriate scaffolding, coaching, and modeling through visual, verbal, and written supports as students learn skills or concepts
 - use of **multiple** data sources to diagnose student strengths and needs in collaboration with general and special education colleagues
 - **clear targeted** goals for students in lessons/instruction/services and practice opportunities that align with individual student strengths and needs
 - differentiation based on students' IEP goals and benchmarks
 - relevant connections to students' prior knowledge

Lessons provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:

- 2
 - **appropriate** scaffolding, coaching, and modeling through visual, verbal, and written supports as students learn skills or concepts
 - use of data to diagnose student strengths and needs in collaboration with general or special education colleagues
 - **unclear connections** to targeted goals for students in lessons/instruction/services and/or practice opportunities that **misalign** with individual student strengths and needs
 - **some** differentiation based on students' IEP goals and benchmarks
 - adequate connections to students' prior knowledge

Lessons provide assignments and activities that contain the following components:

1

- **inadequate** scaffolding, coaching, and modeling through visual, verbal, and written supports as students learn skills or concepts
- **little or no** use of data to diagnose student strengths and needs in collaboration with general or special education colleagues
- **unclear connections** to targeted goals for students in lessons/instruction/services and practice opportunities that align with individual student strengths and needs
- **rare connections** to targeted goals for students in lessons/instruction/services and/or **limited** practice opportunities
- **little or no** differentiation based on students' IEP goals and benchmarks
- limited connections to students' prior knowledge

Evidence Samples

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Monitoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IEP | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLC Agendas | <input type="checkbox"/> Content Enhancements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work Samples | <input type="checkbox"/> Scaffolding Tools (graphic organizers, anchor charts, rubrics, checklists, partially completed task, highlighters, word wall, spell checkers, mnemonic devices, text generation) |

DOMAIN II: STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Standard 3: Assists students in self-regulation and monitors generalization of learning

Indicators

4

- **Regularly** opens the lesson with a clear introduction and review, model of skills and cognitive strategies, and/or provides clear explanation of concepts, depending on where the teacher is in a learning progression
- Uses a **variety of assessments** to effectively monitor student learning and progress
- Provides **ample** and effective opportunities for students to monitor their own learning through explicit modeling of strategies to solve problems, regulate attention, organize materials, and/or regulate thoughts
- Provides students with timely, positive, and goal-directed feedback in the student's mode of communication (verbal, nonverbal, or written)
- Creates opportunities for students to apply teacher and peer feedback to improve performance, enhance learning, and/or reach behavior goals
- Collaborates with others so that students use learned skills in situations other than the original learning environment and in the absence of ongoing instruction

3

- **Opens** the lesson with a clear introduction and review, model of skills and cognitive strategies, and/or provides clear explanation of concepts, depending on where the teacher is in a learning progression
- Uses formative assessments to **effectively** monitor student learning and progress
- Provides **effective** opportunities for students to monitor their own learning through explicit modeling of strategies to solve problems, regulate attention, organize materials, and/or regulate thoughts
- Provides students with **timely, positive, and goal-directed feedback** in the student's mode of communication (verbal, nonverbal, or written)
- Creates opportunities for students to apply teacher and peer feedback to improve performance, enhance learning, and/or reach behavior goals

2

- **Inconsistently** opens the lesson with an introduction and review, model of skills and cognitive strategies, and/or provides explanation of concepts that is sometimes unclear, depending upon where the teacher is in a learning progression
- Uses formative assessments to **adequately** monitor student learning and progress
- Provides **adequate** opportunities for students to monitor their own learning through explicit modeling of strategies to solve problems, regulate attention, organize materials, and/or regulate thoughts
- Provides students **with limited or non-specific feedback** in the student's mode of communication (verbal, nonverbal, or written)

1

- **Often does not** deliver lessons that are coherent, containing a clear opening, review, model, and sufficient practice opportunity
- **Inadequately** monitors student learning and progress
- Provides **inadequate** opportunities for students to monitor their own learning through explicit modeling of strategies to solve problems, regulate attention, organize materials, and/or regulate thoughts
- Provides students with **little feedback** or it is **not** in the student's mode of communication (verbal, nonverbal, or written)

Evidence Examples

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> IEPs | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PLC Agendas | <input type="checkbox"/> Content Enhancements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Progress Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of feedback (task-level, process level, self-regulation) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback (specific/timely/clear feedback, goal-directed, focus on misunderstandings rather than a lack of information, appropriate for developmental level) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scaffolding Interactions (Thinking aloud, modeling inner thoughts, self-instruction, cueing, wait time, prompting, questioning, repeating) | |

DOMAIN II: STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Standard 4: Provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content by using explicit instructional strategies

Indicators

- The teacher moves **all** students to a deeper understanding of content through:
- a variety of teacher-led, peer-assisted, self-regulated, and/or technology-supported strategies
 - flexible grouping to promote extended academic interactions and collaborative work
 - prompts, partial clues, reminders of the strategy or rule, and/or examples of the concept as needed to support students' attainment of the learning goal
- 4
- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement using principles of Universal Design for Learning
 - providing opportunities for students to demonstrate connections between what they are learning and how it connects to their personal and professional goals/interests

- The teacher moves **almost all** students to a deeper understanding of content through:
- a variety of teacher-led, peer-assisted, self-regulated, and/or technology-supported strategies
 - flexible grouping to promote extended academic interactions and collaborative work
 - prompts, partial clues, reminders of the strategy or rule, and/or examples of the concept as needed to support students' attainment of the learning goal
- 3
- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement using principles of Universal Design for Learning

- providing opportunities for students to demonstrate connections between what they are learning and how it connects to their personal and professional goals/interests

The teacher moves **most** students to a deeper understanding of content through:

2

- a variety of teacher-led, peer-assisted, self-regulated, and/or technology-supported strategies
- flexible grouping to promote extended academic interactions and collaborative work
- prompts, partial clues, reminders of the strategy or rule, and/or examples of the concept as needed to support students' attainment of the learning goal
- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement using principles of Universal Design for Learning
- providing opportunities for students to demonstrate connections between what they are learning and how it connects to their personal and professional goals/interests

The teacher **moves few or does not move** students to a deeper understanding of content through:

1

- a variety of teacher-led, peer-assisted, self-regulated, and/or technology-supported strategies
- flexible grouping to promote extended academic interactions and collaborative work
- prompts, partial clues, reminders of the strategy or rule, and/or examples of the concept as needed to support students' attainment of the learning goal
- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement using principles of Universal Design for Learning
- providing opportunities for students to demonstrate connections between what they are learning and how it connects to their personal and professional goals/interests

Evidence Examples

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Responses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Work Samples | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Group Instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Modeling | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Instruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fading Scaffolds (I do, we do, you do) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Grouping (small groups of same or mixed ability, pairs, whole-class, individual instruction) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variation in Resources | |

DOMAIN III: CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Standard 5: Manages a learning-focused classroom community and productive learning environments for students with disabilities

Indicators

- 4
- Creates **effective** routines in the learning environment specific to the nature of the specialized classroom, individual need, and support services with specific expectations and opportunities for students to practice
 - Consistently and intentionally plans to prevent misbehavior through **positive** behavioral interventions and supports
 - **Defines methods** for ensuring individual behavioral and academic success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings
 - Designs learning environments (e.g., physical, climate, time allowance) that result in **student ownership** of individual and group activities
 - Teaches social skills intentionally, including using explicit instruction strategies **and specific replacement behaviors**, to support student learning of skills required for students to work with others in the classroom while working toward student independence

3

- Creates **effective** routines in the learning environment specific to the nature of the specialized classroom, individual need, and support services with specific expectations and opportunities for students to practice
- Consistently and intentionally plans to prevent misbehavior through **positive** behavioral interventions and supports
- **Defines methods** for ensuring individual behavioral and academic success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings
- Designs learning environments (e.g., physical, climate, time allowance) that result in **all** students' engagement in individual and group activities
- **Teaches social skills intentionally**, including using explicit instruction strategies, to support student learning of skills required for students to work with others in the classroom while working toward student independence

2

- Has developed **some** classroom routines, but routine procedures are **not smoothly executed** and do not appear to be developed based upon students' needs
- **Inconsistently plans** to prevent misbehavior through positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Is unable to clearly communicate intention and purpose for **some** rules, routines, procedures, or grouping schemes
- Designs learning environments (e.g., physical, climate, time allowance) that result in **most** students' engagement
- **Rarely** plans for and teaches social skills explicitly **but sometimes attempts** to teach social skills relevant to a particular situation or "teachable moment"

1

- **Does not** effectively utilize classroom routines and procedures
- **Rarely or does not** plan to prevent misbehavior through positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Is unable to clearly communicate intention and purpose for **most** rules, routines, procedures, or grouping schemes
- Learning environments (e.g., physical, climate, time allowance) are **not intentionally planned** and result in **some or few** students' engagement
- **Does not** plan for and teach social skills explicitly **or punishes misbehavior** but does not teach appropriate behavior/skills to replace misbehavior

Evidence Examples

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time on Task Counts | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology (increase engagement, increase access to content, demonstrate understanding) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visible Rules, Routines, and Expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Assistive Technology (word processing, digital cameras, video conferencing, concept mapping) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quotes Explaining Expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> Content-Specific Assistive Technology (calculators, thermometers, scientific probes) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Center/Learning Management System | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Modification Charts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptations of Environment | |

DOMAIN III: CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Standard 6: The teacher manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology, when appropriate) effectively for student learning

Indicators

- **Effectively** adapts the physical environment and maximizes resources (including assistive technology and visual content displays as appropriate) to support student learning
 - Maximizes time such students **always** have something meaningful to do
 - Creates an environment where students **consistently** execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner **with minimal to no direction or narration from the teacher**
 - **Engages students in setting classroom routines and procedures**
- 4**
- **Effectively** adapts the physical environment and maximizes resources (including assistive technology and visual content displays as appropriate) to support student learning
 - Maximizes time such that students **always** have something meaningful to do
 - Creates an environment where students **consistently** execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner with direction and narration from the teacher
- 3**
- **Adequately** adapts the physical environment and maximizes resources (including assistive technology and visual content displays as appropriate) to support student learning
 - Allows **brief periods of time** when students do not have something meaningful to do
 - Creates an environment where students execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner **only some of the time** with direction and narration from the teacher
- 2**
- **Inadequately** adapts the physical environment and maximizes resources (including assistive technology and visual content displays as appropriate) to support student learning
 - Allows significant periods of time when students **do not** have something meaningful to do
 - Creates an environment where students **do not** execute transitions, routines, and procedures in an orderly and efficient manner
- 1**

Evidence Examples

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptations to Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Quotes-Interventions/Supports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Content Displayed | <input type="checkbox"/> IEP Goals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Assessments/Behavior Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Center/Learning Management System Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention Supports (dosage, alignment, attention to transfer, explicit instruction principles, behavior support) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Uses "Tell-Show-Practice: | |

DOMAIN III: CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Standard 7: Organizes resources and ensures equitable physical access to facilities while demonstrating high expectations and maintaining an environment that is inviting, safe, flexible, and conducive to teaching and learning.

Indicators

- Communicates respectfully to **all** students
 - Provides **ample and** effective opportunities for peer learning and/or flexible grouping
 - Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with **all** students and uses effective techniques to deescalate student behavior whenever appropriate
 - **Promote and model** age-appropriate and culturally responsive teaching practices to foster student engagement across learning environments
- 4**

- 3**

 - Communicates respectfully to **all** students
 - Provides **effective** opportunities for peer learning and/or flexible grouping
 - Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with **all** students **and** uses **effective** techniques to de-escalate student behavior whenever appropriate
 - **Effectively** employs age-appropriate and culturally responsive teaching practices to foster student engagement across learning environments
- 2**

 - Communicates respectfully to students **with rare exceptions**
 - Provides **adequate** opportunities for peer learning and/or flexible grouping
 - Demonstrates a strong positive relationship with **some** students **and/or** uses **ineffective** techniques to de-escalate students' behavior
 - **Adequately** employs age-appropriate and culturally responsive teaching practices to foster student engagement across learning environments
- 1**

 - **Often communicates disrespectfully** with students
 - **Rarely or never** uses peer support and flexible grouping strategies
 - **Does not** demonstrate a strong positive relationship with students and/or **does not** use techniques to de-escalate students' behavior
 - **Inadequately or does not** employ age-appropriate and culturally responsive teaching practices to foster student engagement across learning environments

Evidence Examples

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Quotes-Positive Behavior Interventions <input type="checkbox"/> Quotes-Praise <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Uses "Tell-Show-Practice" <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptations to Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Content Displayed <input type="checkbox"/> Assistive Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Center/Learning Management System Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Uses "Tell-Show-Practice": | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Time Tally for Teacher-Directed Learning Versus Peer-Learning or Flexible Grouping <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Modification Charts and/or Plans <input type="checkbox"/> Quotes-Interventions/Supports <input type="checkbox"/> IEP Goals <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior Assessments/Behavior Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention Supports (dosage, alignment, attention to transfer, explicit instruction principles, behavior support) |
|---|--|

DOMAIN IV: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Standard 8: Engages in professional learning and complies with reporting requirements

Indicators

- 4**

 - Proactively seeks out, participates in, **and shares** professional learning to improve practice based on observer feedback
 - **Fully integrates** into professional practice the knowledge gained in professional learning communities, collaboration with peers and leadership, and focused professional development
 - **Promotes** and adheres to standards of professional practice regarding IEP compliance, including IEP meeting organization, individual goal development, and paperwork completion
 - Maintains confidentiality of information except when information is released under specific conditions of written consent and statutory confidentiality requirements
 - **Promotes understanding** of Federal, State, and local policies/mandates regarding identifying and educating students with disabilities **among students, families, and professionals**

- 3**
 - **Proactively seeks out** and participates in professional learning to improve practice **based on** observer feedback
 - Fully integrates into professional practice the knowledge gained in professional learning communities, collaboration with peers and leadership, and focused professional development
 - Adheres to standards of professional practice regarding IEP compliance, including IEP meeting organization, individual goal development, and paperwork completion
 - Maintains confidentiality of information except when information is released under specific conditions of written consent and statutory confidentiality requirements
 - **Demonstrates understanding** of Federal, State, and local policies/mandates regarding identifying and educating students with disabilities
- 2**
 - Participates in required professional learning and applies **some** observer feedback to improve practice
 - **Applies** knowledge gained from professional learning but **does not fully integrate** the new information
 - **Adheres** to standards of professional practice regarding IEP compliance, including IEP meeting organization, individual goal development, and paperwork completion **with oversight**
 - **Maintains** confidentiality of information except when information is released under specific conditions of written consent and statutory confidentiality requirements
 - **Demonstrates limited understanding** of Federal, State, and local policies/mandates regarding identifying and educating students with disabilities
- 1**
 - Participates in required professional learning, but applies **little or no** observer feedback to improve practice
 - **Does not** apply knowledge gained from professional learning
 - **Occasionally does not adhere** to standards of professional practice regarding IEP compliance including IEP meeting organization, individual goal development, and paperwork completion
 - **Violates** confidentiality of information
 - **Does not** demonstrate understanding of Federal, State, and local policies/mandates

Evidence Examples

- Professional Learning Agendas
- Session Registrations
- PLC Meeting Agendas
- Email or Communication Logs
- Past PGS Observation Feedback and Evidence of Implementation

DOMAIN IV: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Standard 9: Collaborates with families/guardians and professionals

Indicators

- 4**
 - **Proactively initiates** and collaborates with administrators, general educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals, families, and community agencies using a variety of methods
 - **Partners** with families or guardians to **coordinate** learning between home and school
 - Organizes and facilitates **effective** meetings with professionals and families to establish mutual expectations for students' instructional and/or behavioral outcomes
 - **Includes students in meetings (as appropriate) to develop IEP goals, including behavior goals, and encourages families/student to self-advocate**

- 3**

 - Collaborates with administrators, general educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and families **using a variety of methods**
 - **Partners** with families or guardians **to coordinate learning** between home and school
 - Organizes and facilitates **effective** meetings with professionals and families to **establish mutual expectations** for students' instructional and/or behavioral outcomes
- 2**

 - **Collaborates** with administrators, general educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and families **only when required**
 - **Communicates** with families/guardians **reactively** concerning student academic progress and development, and outreach is **mostly for intervention or corrective reasons**
 - **Organizes and facilitates required meetings with professionals and families**
- 1**

 - **Minimally or does not** collaborate with administrators, general educators, related service providers, and paraprofessionals as required
 - **Rarely or never** communicates with families/guardians

Evidence Examples

- IEP Sign-In Sheets
- Learning Management System or Secure Apps Communication Documentation
- PLC Agendas
- Leadership Team Meeting Agendas
- Newsletters

RESOURCES

All forms are optional. Documentation of the Special Education Teacher observations, post-observation conferences, summative conferences and summative rating for each special education teacher should be on file at each school/district.

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GLOSSARY

ARTIFACTS: Tangible evidence that is data driven.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY: Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING: Collaborative planning is the planning for, involvement with, and support of students by two or more concerned groups, (i.e., administrators, teachers, library media specialists, resource teachers, parents, community representatives).

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES: Strategies that help students learn “how-to-think”, instead of “what-to-think.” They are student operated, as opposed to more traditional teacher operated systems, meaning that they are based on students’ self-control rather than external rewards and punishment.

DIFFERENTIATION: “A process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student’s growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is and assist in the learning process” (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014). Differentiation is an expectation for all teachers and related to all students. It is not a special education term.

DOMAINS: Domains are broad categories of skills, knowledge, dispositions, and related elements in a educator’s practice. Domains are umbrella descriptions defined by standards and indicators.

EVIDENCE: Evidence is a factual reporting of events that is not biased or clouded with personal opinion. Evidence may include educator and student behavior as well as special education documentation of evidence.

FEEDBACK: Feedback is insight from the observer on an educator’s practice that is grounded in the four domains and nine standards of the Special Education Growth Rubric. To effectively support improvements in practice, feedback should be focused and actionable – not a long list of things the educator might change.

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING: Flexible scheduling is a scheduling arrangement that allows for variation in services provided. Flexible scheduling allows educators to schedule their services into the natural learning environment as needed to meet student’s needs. Services are scheduled as the result of collaborative planning instruction to integrate with specially designed instruction.

FORMAL SPECIAL EDUCATION OBSERVATION: A formal educator observation is a period of time during which a trained evaluator uses a rubric to measure observable special education processes, including specific planning task, student instruction (individual, small group, or whole group), educator-peer or educator-student interactions, learning environments, collaborative task, services, or other professional responsibilities. These observations may even include staff development meetings or staff orientations hosted and directed by the educator. Formal special education observations will be conducted at least once a year.

INDICATORS: Indicators are the smallest category for describing and organizing educator knowledge, skills, dispositions, and related elements in an educator performance framework. Indicators are narrow, observable or measurable descriptors of educator practice.

INFORMAL/ WALK-THROUGH OBSERVATION: Informal observations are unannounced, used primarily for formative purposes, and narrowly targeted to specific processes. Walk-through visits are a type of informal educator observation. This type of observation can occur in any setting such as staff meetings, professional learning communities, IEP meetings, etc.

INSTRUCTIONAL SCAFFOLDING: A process through which a teacher adds supports for students in order to enhance learning and aid in the mastery of tasks. The teacher does this by systematically building on students' experiences and knowledge as they are learning new skills.

EDUCATOR SELF-ASSESSMENT: educators should reflect on their professional practice relative to the best practices identified by research. The purpose of self-assessment is twofold: it actively engages the educator in launching his or her own evaluation, and it prepares the educator to propose rigorous, targeted goals. The purpose of the self-evaluation tool is for personal growth and self-assessment.

MEASURES: Measures are types of instruments or tools used to assess the performance and outcomes of educator practice (e.g., observations, progress monitoring, individualized education plans, and learning objectives).

MULTIPLE MEASURES: Multiple measures include the use of more than one instrument or tool by observers to assess the performance and outcome of educator practice.

OBSERVATIONS: Visually observe the educator in multiple learning environments (general education classroom, co-teaching, resource room, self-contained classroom, small group instruction, or individual instruction on the required evidence).

POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE: A post-observation conference is a meeting between the educator and an evaluator that takes place after a formal observation. The purpose of the conference is to allow the observer to ask clarifying questions about how the educator fulfills their role within each domain. The educator should also receive feedback and next steps during this conference.

PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE: A pre-observation conference is a meeting between an educator and an observer that takes place prior to a formal observation. The purpose of the conference is to provide the observer with background information about the scheduled observation. Additionally, it is an opportunity for the educator to ask clarifying questions prior to the formal observation.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN: A professional growth plan is a plan developed and implemented to identify and address areas for improvement in a educator's performance. A written plan for improvement includes resources and assistance (intensive support needed to assist the educator) and the documentation of an acceptable level of performance.

REVIEW OF EVIDENCE: Each educator should have a system so that his or her evidence is easy to access for review. An evidence reference list organized by domain and standard should be available for administrative access. Evidence should be directly linked to domains and standards. Evidence will be directly linked to specific domains and standards of Mississippi Special Education Professional Growth System.

STANDARDS: Standards are definitions of the specific teaching activities and responsibilities in each domain that are research-based best practices.

SUMMATIVE OBSERVATION CONFERENCE: The Summative Observation Conference is an end-of-year meeting between the educator and observer. The purpose of this collaborative conversation is to review feedback and summative ratings from observations of practice and to identify successes, areas for growth, and next steps toward the educator’s continued professional growth. It is also an opportunity to reflect on available student data that may inform ways to improve practice and student outcomes.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING: “A scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that (a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (b) reduces barriers in instruction; provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges; and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.” (Higher Education Opportunity Act PL 110–315 § 103(a)(24), 2008)

THE OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK CYCLE: BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLECTING EVIDENCE⁴

Observe

The observer visits the learning environment and takes notes on educator and student/teacher interactions.

Best Practices for Observation

1. Eliminate effects of bias. Enter the learning environment without judgment and work from evidence.
2. Collect evidence, not interpretation. Write down only what the librarian and students/teachers say and do.

⁴ Adapted from New York City Department of Education. (n.d.). The Observation and Feedback Cycle: Best Practices for Low Inference Notes. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from https://www.weteachnyc.org/media2016/filer_public/22/e8/22e801b3-f4c9-4f02-9f20-df500f056337/best-practices-for-low-inference-notes.pdf Policy Guide

3. Look for learning and/or collaboration. Seek evidence of what students know/do and how the educators work together.
4. Review and reflect. Pause to organize your evidence before interpreting.

Collecting evidence during an observation

Collecting evidence during the observation is the first step in ensuring that ratings are accurate, and feedback aligns to educators’ needed area(s) of improvement. Interpretation can be a reflection of one’s biases and personal preferences, particularly when it is not supported by a collection of evidence.

Evidence collecting is a skill, not knowledge; it comes with practice. When collecting evidence, observers describe what is taking place without drawing conclusions or making judgments about what he or she observes. When collecting evidence on instruction, ask:

- What do you see and hear the special education teacher and students/teachers saying and doing?
- What evidence can you gather about learning or collaboration?
- What will students know and be able to do at the end of the lesson?
- What will the teachers know at the end of the professional development?
- What resources will teachers have access to after collaborative lesson planning?

Common mistakes/pitfalls to avoid

- Distinguish between evidence and interpretation. For instance, you can identify keywords that give away subjectivity: e.g., “I think,” or “I feel.” Be cognizant of keeping evidence separate from interpretation, using this framework:

EVIDENCE	INTERPRETATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is observable ● Is not influenced by the observer’s perspective ● Is free of evaluative words ● Does not draw conclusions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makes inferences ● Depends on observer’s perspective ● Includes evaluative words ● Draws conclusions

- Replace vague quantifiers by capturing more specific evidence (e.g., “a lot of students checked out books first nine-weeks” vs. “125 of 375 students checked out books first nine-weeks.”)

Tips for collecting evidence

There are various techniques to collect student outcomes data during an observation:

- If the educator is leading a lesson on a particular skill or is co-teaching with a teacher:

- Sit with a table/group of students. Write down the questions asked, and answers given by the students in that group.
- Select a problem, determine the correct answer, and tally the number of students who have the correct response written on their papers.
- Move around the learning environment and identify students performing at high, medium, low levels and strategically capture their work.
- Ask students to tell you what they are learning/doing, why they are learning, and if they have learned anything new today.
- Collect the collaborative lesson plan and/or copies of student work prior to leaving the library.
- If the special education teacher is working with teachers, then make sure that notes reflect what the teachers will know and be able to do at the end of the professional development.
 - Collect the agenda, presentation, and any other documents that pertain to the professional development.
- If the educator is completing an administrative task such as IEP development, progress monitoring, or behavior plans, then make sure that notes reflect what the educator accomplished during this time and why it is important to student learning.
- If recording observation notes using a tablet, use the tablet to take pictures of actual work accomplished during the observation.
- Monitor observation notes to ensure that the “student/teacher side” is not neglected.

How do I capture as much evidence as possible?

- Effective evidence collection can be done using scripting, coding, and anecdotes.
 - **Scripting** – writing down educator and/or student language verbatim
 - **Coding** – using shorthand to increase how much can be written and the quality of data collected (SET=special education teacher, S=student, CFU=check for understanding)
 - **Anecdotes** – brief descriptions about “who did what” and other important information without specifics about what was said
- Time transitions by using time stamping. Time stamping helps to record more accurate information about the flow of a lesson or task. Time stamping also provides information about lesson pacing and the duration of administrative task.

TIME STAMP EXAMPLES (Special Education Lesson)

Time	Special Education/Student/Teacher Actions
9:15	SET says to small group “Let’s get into groups to work on addition.”
9:20	Ss moved into groups and began to work on addition lesson
9:40	After CFU, SET allows Ss to use AT (calculator) to check their answers

- Copy learning target or make a note if it is not posted. (educators will need to have learning targets posted during skills intervention and collaborative lesson with classroom teachers).
- Draw circles to represent groups of students or educator interaction with students.
- If you notice a trend, create a tally on the side, so you can capture other evidence that may be occurring while also documenting the trend. For example, Jane is the only one responding to the educator’s questions. You may capture several instances verbatim, but you can also capture how many times it occurs if you can’t capture everything Jane said.
- When appropriate, collect full interactions:
 - When educator did __, student __. When student said __, educator said __.

Sample Codes for Observation Scripting

THE BASICS	
Code	Use
SET	Special education teacher
S1	Second certified educator
SEA	Special education assistant
S/T	Student/Teacher
Ss/Ts	Students/Teachers
CAPS	Student/Teacher responses (Saves you from using quotations marks and noting S/T repeatedly)
✓ or tally marks	Repeated action (e.g., L remind to use shelf markers ✓✓✓✓ = 4 reminders)

DESCRIBING LIBRARIAN & STUDENT/TEACHER ACTIONS

Code	Use
------	-----

HR	Hands raised
CFU	Check for Understanding
FB	Feedback to Students/Teachers
SETAAS	Special Education Teacher Asked Another Student
INT	Introduction to New Materials/Mini-Lesson (Students or Teachers)
GP IP	Guided Practice / Independent Practice
RA	Read Aloud
GR	Guided Reading
SR	Shared Reading
NR	No Response from Students/Teachers
D	Disruption

Special Education Evidence Collection

A data binder that is organized by name of document or artifact is the best way for special education teachers to collect and organize reports and information for administrators. Photographs are not required as evidence and should not be part of the data/evidence binder.

Templates have been created to help educators collect and organize data for the Special Education Teacher Professional Growth System. Each template contains a header with the name of the document and connections to the LGS (e.g., Title: Professional Growth Plan; Librarian Growth System: Domain II, Standard 2).

Evidence Checklist

The following evidence checklist includes the required evidence as well as the link to additional information listed either in the current Mississippi Public and Nonpublic School Library Guide and the school library website: www.mdek12.org/Library (e.g., SLG.1.5 – School Library Guide, Section 1, Part 5).

STANDARDS	EVIDENCE
<p>Standard 1: Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi college, Career Ready Standards, and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and represent a coherent sequence of learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson Plans ○ IEPs ○ PLC Agendas ○ Progress Monitoring ○ Assessments ○ Content Enhancements
<p>Standard 2: Lessons have high levels of learning for all students as indicated through general and specialized curriculum to inform instructional decisions for students with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lesson Plans ○ IEPs ○ PLC Agendas ○ Assessments ○ Content Enhancements

Standard 3: Assists students in self-regulation and monitors generalization of learning

Standard 4: Provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content by using explicit instructional strategies

Standard 5: Manages a learning-focused classroom community and productive learning environments for students with disabilities

Standard 6: The teacher manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology, when appropriate) effectively for student learning.

Standard 7: Creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students

Standard 8: Engages in professional learning and complies with reporting requirements

Standard 9: Collaborates with families/guardians and professionals

- Lesson Plans
- IEPs
- PLC Agendas
- Progress Monitoring
- Assessments
- Content Enhancements
- Samples of Feedback

- Lesson Plans
- Assessments
- Student Work Samples
- Teacher Modeling
- Fading Scaffolds
- Variation in Resources
- Assistive Technology
- Student Responses
- Small Group Instruction
- Individual Instruction

- Time on Task Counts
- Visible Rules, Routines, and Expectations
- Quotes Explaining Expectations
- Learning Center/Learning Management System
- Assistive Technology
- Behavior Modification Charts
- Adaptations of Environment

- Adaptations to Environment
- Visual Content Displayed
- Assistive Technology
- Learning Center/Learning Management System Organization
- Quotes-Interventions/Supports
- IEP Goals

- Teacher Quotes-Positive Behavior Interventions
- Quotes-Praise
- Time Tally for Teacher Directed Learning Versus Peer Learning or Flexible Grouping
- Behavior Modification Charts and/or Plans

- Professional Learning Agendas
- Session Registrations
- PLC Meeting Agendas
- Past PGS Observation Feedback and Evidence of Implementation
- Email or Communication Logs

- IEP Sign-in sheets
- Learning Management System or Secure Apps Communication Documentation
- PLC Agendas
- Leadership Team Meeting Agendas
- Newsletters

SAMPLE FEEDBACK CONVERSATION PROTOCOL⁵

Steps for Effective Feedback

LEADERS SHOULD BRING (SUGGESTED):	LIBRARIAN SHOULD BRING (SUGGESTED):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation Tracker ● One-Pager: Steps for Effective Feedback ● Pre-planned script for the meeting (questions, observation, evidence, data, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing lesson plans ● Program goals ● Collection development plan ● Budget
<p>1 Praise</p> <p>PRECISE PRAISE-NARRATIVE THE POSITIVE: <i>SAMPLE PRAISE:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We set a goal at the beginning of the year of _____ and I noticed how [you met the goal] by [state concrete positive actions librarian took.] ● What made you successful? How did it feel? 	
<p>2 Probe</p> <p>PROBE-START WITH A TARGETED QUESTION: <i>SAMPLE PROBE:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the purpose of [certain area of practice]? ● What was your objective/goal for _____ [are of practice]? 	
<p>3 ID Problem & Action Step</p> <p>PROGRESS TO CONCRETE ACTION STEP-ADD SCAFFOLDING AS NEEDED: <i>SAMPLE SCAFFOLDING PROMPTS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educator self-identifies the problem: Yes. What, then, would be the best action step to address that problem? ● Ask scaffolded questions: How did your practice or task try to meet this goal/objective? ● Present data: Do you remember what happened when _____? [Educator then identifies what happened] What did that do to the outcome? ● State the problem directly: [State what you observed and what action step will be needed to solve the problem.] 	
<p>4 Practice</p> <p>PRACTICE-ROLE PLAY/STIMULATE HOW THEY COULD HAVE IMPROVED TASK: <i>SAMPLE PRACTICE:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let's try that. [immediately jump into role play]. ● I'm your student. I say/do. How do you respond? 4 [Level 4: Model for the educator, and then have them practice it.] <p>DESIGN/REVISE UPCOMING TASK TO IMPLEMENT THIS ACTION: <i>SAMPLE DESIGN/REVISION PROMPTS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When would be best to observe your implementation of this? ● More leader guidance/driven: I'll come in tomorrow and look for this technique. 	
<p>5 Plan Ahead</p> <p>SET TIMELINE FOR FOLLOW-UP: <i>SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP PROMPTS:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When would be best to observe your implementation of this? ● More leader guidance/driver: I'll come in tomorrow and look for this technique. <p>What to do-Set timeline for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completed Materials: when educator will complete revised report ● Educator Observes Master Educator: when they'll observe master educator implementing action step 	

⁵ From Leverage Leadership: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. Copyright © 2012 by John Wiley and Sons, Inc. Reproduced by permission of Jossey-Bass, an Imprint of Wiley. www.wiley.com

COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN STANDARDS

Special Education Teacher Evaluation

The following cross-walk demonstrates the strong influence of the high leverage practices (HLPs) (McLeskey et al., 2017) and CEC Standards in the development of the Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric.

CEC Standards:

Standard 1: Engaging in professional learning and practice within ethical guidelines

Candidates practice within ethical and legal guidelines; advocate for improved outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families while considering their social, cultural, and linguistic diversity; and engage in ongoing self-reflecting to design and implement professional learning activities.

Standard 2: Understanding and addressing each individual's developmental and learning needs

Candidates use their understanding of human growth and development; the multiple influences on development, individual differences, diversity, including exceptionalities, and families and communities to plan and implement inclusive learning environments and experiences that provide individuals with exceptionalities high quality learning experiences reflective of each individual's strengths and needs.

Standard 3: Demonstrating subject matter content and specialized curricular knowledge

Candidates apply their understanding of the academic subject matter content of the general curriculum and specialized curricula to inform their programmatic and instructional decisions for learners with exceptionalities.

Standard 4: Using assessment to understand the learner and learning environment for data-based decision making

Candidates assess students' learning, behavior, and the classroom environment in order to evaluate and support classroom and school-based problem-solving systems of intervention and instruction. Candidates evaluate students to determine their strengths and needs, contribute to students' eligibility determination, communicate students' progress, inform short and long-term instructional planning, and make ongoing adjustments to instruction using technology as appropriate.

Standard 5: Using effective instruction to support learning

Candidates use knowledge of individuals' development, learning needs and assessment data to inform decisions about effective instruction. Candidates use explicit instructional strategies and employ strategies to promote active engagement and increased motivation to individualize instruction to support each individual. Candidates use whole group instruction, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individual instruction. Candidates teach individuals to use meta-/cognitive strategies to support and self-regulate learning.

Standard 6: Supporting social, emotional, and behavioral growth

Candidates create and contribute to safe, respectful, and productive learning environments for individuals with exceptionalities through the use of effective routines and procedures and use a range of preventive and responsive practices to support social, emotional, and educational wellbeing. They follow ethical and legal guidelines and work collaboratively with families and other professionals to conduct behavioral assessments for intervention and program developments.

Standard 7: collaborating with team members

Candidates apply team processes and communication strategies to collaborate in culturally responsive manner with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals within the school, other educational settings, and the community to plan programs and access services for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities

- HLP 1: Collaborate with professionals to increase student success
- HLP 2: Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families
- HLP 3: Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services
- HLP 4: Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs
- HLP 5: Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs
- HLP 6: Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes
- HLP 7: Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment
- HLP 8: Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior
- HLP 9: Teach social behaviors
- HLP 10: Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans
- HLP 11: Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals
- HLP 12: Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal
- HLP 13: Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals
- HLP 14: Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence
- HLP 15: Provide scaffolded supports
- HLP 16: Use explicit instruction
- HLP 17: Use flexible grouping
- HLP 18: Use strategies to promote active student engagement
- HLP 19: Use assistive and instructional technologies
- HLP 20: Provide intensive instruction
- HLP 21: Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings
- HLP 22: Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior

Standards Crosswalk

MDE Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric	CEC Standard Components and High Leverage Practices
Domain I: Lesson Design	
<p>Standard 1: Lessons are aligned to the Mississippi College, Career Ready Standards, and/or the Mississippi Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (as appropriate) and represent a coherent sequence of learning</p> <p>Standard 2: Lessons have high levels of learning for all students as indicated through general and specialized curriculum to inform instructional decisions for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Standard 3: Demonstrating subject matter content and specialized curricular knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLP 11 • HLP 13 • HLP 12 • HLP 13 • HLP 14 • HLP 15 • HLP 21 <p>Standard 4: Using assessment to understand the learner and the learning environment for data-based decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLP5 <p>Standard 5: Using effective instruction to support student learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLP 11 • HLP 12 • HLP 13

MDE Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric	CEC Standard Components and High Leverage Practices
Domain II: Student Understanding	
<p>Standard 3: Assists students in self-regulation and monitors generalization of learning</p> <p>Standard 4: Provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content by using explicit instructional</p>	<p>Standard 2: Understanding and addressing each individual’s developmental and learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLP 4

strategies

- HLP 11
- HLP 12

Standard 4: Using assessment to understand the learner and the learning environment for data-based decision making

- HLP 4
- HLP 6

Standard 5: Using effective instruction to support student learning

- HLP 6
- HLP 8
- HLP 14
- HLP 16
- HLP 20

MDE Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric

CEC Standard Components and High Leverage Practices

Domain III: Culture and Environment

Standard 5: Manages a learning-focused classroom community and productive learning environments for students with disabilities

Standard 6: The teacher manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology, when appropriate) effectively for student learning

Standard 7: Creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students

Standard 4: Using assessment to understand the learner and the learning environment for data-based decision making

- HLP 19

Standard 5: Using effective instruction to support student learning

- HLP 19
- HLP 9
- HLP 18
- HLP 22
- HLP 17

Standard 6: Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth

- HLP 7
- HLP 8
- HLP 9
- HLP 15
- HLP 16
- HLP 21
- HLP 22

MDE Special Education Teacher Growth Rubric

CEC Standard Components and High Leverage Practices

Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities

Standard 8: Engages in professional learning and complies with reporting requirements

Standard 9: Collaborates with families/guardians and professionals

Standard 1: Engaging in professional learning and practice within ethical guidelines (HLP 3: collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services)

Standard 7: Collaborating with team members

- HLP 2
- HLP 1

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