Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation

Facilitator Guide for Training Module 6: Observations and Feedback

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Overview of the Training Module Series

Training Module Purpose and Goals

This series of eight training modules is designed to prepare evaluators and school leadership teams to implement the new Massachusetts educator evaluation system in their schools through the following intended outcomes:

- Make the 5-Step Cycle concrete and actionable for educators and their evaluators.
- Support school leadership teams in developing a common understanding of the new educator evaluation framework and the opportunities for professional growth and development using the Massachusetts Model System.
- Provide participants with implementation tips and strategies to help schools make educator evaluation meaningful and doable.

The training module series will accomplish these goals through the use of consistent, standardized training materials, detailed facilitator guides, and participant handouts that connect to Model System resources.

Audience

The audience for each module is evaluator and/or school-level leadership teams of four to six people. Districts may bring some or all school leadership teams together for a single training session, or training sessions may consist of teams from several districts within a region.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) recommends that each school leadership team include the principal, one to two additional school-level administrators (e.g., assistant principal, curriculum director, department chair), and two to three current classroom teachers representing a variety of subject areas, grade levels, and/or student needs. The modules are designed so that school leadership teams can facilitate abbreviated or complete versions of each module to other school staff (see the Timing and Structure section for more details). For districts that are interested in bringing these trainings back to their school sites, team members should be comfortable presenting information to a group of adult learners.

Timing and Structure

Each training module (with the exception of Training Module 7) is three hours in length and includes interactive learning activities for school leadership teams. Suggested homework assignments described at the conclusion of each module are intended to help participants extend and apply their learning and are designed to take about an hour.
The modules are typically organized into a four-part structure to help facilitators and participants pace the content appropriately. The four segments of each module are as follows:

- **Connecting**—Builds community, prepares the team for learning, and links to prior knowledge, other modules, and current work; designed for all school-based educators
- **Learning**—Describes key concepts and highlights various implementation scenarios; supports teams to apply knowledge and share ideas; designed for all school-based educators
- **Implementing**—Supports teams to problem-solve and plan next steps for schools and districts; geared toward school leadership teams
- **Reflecting**—Engages participants in providing feedback, reflecting on learning, and closing the session

The Connecting and Learning segments compose the first two hours of each module, and the third hour is devoted to the Implementing and Reflecting segments. School leadership teams are encouraged to facilitate either (1) an abridged, two-hour version of each module or (2) a complete module to other school and district staff, as needed.

**List of Training Modules**

**Module 1: Overview.** The first module provides an overview of the module series structure and purposes, introduces the 5-Step Cycle of evaluation and Model System, and examines next steps for strategically implementing the new educator evaluation system in schools.

**Module 2: Unpacking the Rubric.** The second module introduces the basic structure and terminology of the Model System performance rubrics and gives participants an opportunity to examine the rubric components.

**Module 3: Self-Assessment.** The third module engages participants in Step 1 of the 5-Step Cycle—self-assessment. Participants will learn how to engage in a comprehensive self-assessment and how this process prepares the educator to strategically identify professional practice and student learning goals. Participants will also practice using the rubric to reflect on educator practice and consider how best to engage in the analysis of student data and goal proposal.

**Module 4: S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Educator Plan Development.** The fourth module focuses on Step 2 of the 5-Step Cycle cycle—how to develop S.M.A.R.T. goals and educator plans so that goals are needs-driven, specific, and action-oriented and educator plans have clear benchmarks for success and provisions for professional development and support designed to help educators meet their student learning and professional practice goals.

**Module 5: Gathering Evidence.** The fifth module focuses on the collection and organization of evidence by Standard and Indicator and engages participants in thinking strategically about gathering high-quality artifacts to demonstrate performance.

**Module 6: Observations and Feedback.** The sixth module describes expectations for observations (both inside and outside of classrooms), the collection and organization of observation evidence, as well as the sharing of timely, constructive feedback to educators.

**Module 7: Rating Educator Performance.** The seventh module supports participants in using the teacher performance rubric to determine formative or summative ratings. This module is an online tutorial.

**Module 8: Rating Impact on Students.** The eighth module will provide an overview of the ESE-issued guidance on student learning measures and ratings of educator impact on student learning.
Preparing for Module 6

Module Overview

This module provides participants the opportunity to examine expectations and promising practices for gathering evidence through observations, with a focus on the use of short, frequent unannounced observations. Participants will practice gathering evidence via observation, aligning it to appropriate Standards and Indicators, and sharing timely, constructive feedback. This module relies on technology – it is important for the facilitator to ensure the technological components are working correctly. See the Equipment and Materials section for more details.

Context

The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation is a comprehensive educator evaluation system that is focused on improving student learning by supporting analytical conversations (based on evidence) about teaching and leading. Frequent observation of educator practice is essential to improving that practice, but only feasible if most observations are short, unannounced and followed by brief, focused feedback. Observations of practice are not limited to classroom observations. Observations outside the classroom can include team meetings or school events; interactions and communication with parents; and professional growth activities.

Intended Outcomes

At the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Describe the role of observation as a methodology for gathering evidence of educator performance;
- Delineate best practices for conducting high-quality short, frequent, unannounced observations; and
- Utilize evidence collected during sample short observations to provide timely and constructive feedback.
Agenda

I. Welcome (5 minutes)

II. Connecting (25 minutes)
   - Connecting Content (5 minutes)
   - Connecting Activity: Expert Voices on Observation (15 minutes)
   - Connecting Wrap-up/Debrief (5 minutes)

III. Learning (1 hour 30 minutes)
   - Learning Content 1 (5 minutes)
   - Learning Activity 1: Approaching Short Frequent Observations (15 minutes)
   - Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 1 (5 minutes)
   - Learning Content 2 (5 minutes)
   - Learning Activity 2: Video Practice – Short and Sweet (25 minutes)
   - Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 2 (10 minutes)
   - Learning Content 3 (5 minutes)
   - Learning Activity 3: Providing Useful and Timely Feedback (15 minutes)
   - Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 3 (5 minutes)

IV. Learning – Part II (55 minutes)
   - Learning Activity 4: Video and Feedback Practice (50 minutes)
   - Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 4 (5 minutes)

V. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)
   - Homework
   - Come to Closure
Equipment and Materials

Facilitation note: This module relies on technology. The facilitators should plan to test out the equipment and connectivity prior to the start of the session as well as generate a "back up plan" to ensure this aspect will go smoothly. Without the correct equipment, a strong internet connection, or an ESE-issued cd-rom with the Module 6 video clips, most of the module activities will not work.

- **Equipment:** Laptop computer, projector, reliable internet connectivity OR downloaded video clips, and external speakers for video clip
  - If choosing to stream the videos, consider a technology backup plan: if you are going to try to use wireless internet, make sure to know where and how to access a wired connection to the internet; bring two sets of speakers, in case one does not work; stream the videos at the site before the meeting starts to make sure they work; save the video links as bookmarks so it is easy to get to them during the meeting, etc.
  - For ESE-issued CD-ROMs with downloadable video clips, please email EducatorEvaluation@doe.mass.edu with the subject line "Module 6 video request."

- **Materials:**
  Make a copy of the Participant Handout packet for each participant.
  The first section of the Participant Handout packet includes the following two articles.
  Access to video clips for observation (also available in cd from ESE upon request)
    - Video of Kelli (Learning Activity 2): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRczDWKhwlg&feature=youtu.be
    - Video of Chuck (Learning Activity 4): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxBavxlDC9s
  Put the following materials on each table:
    - Markers and highlighters (several per table)
    - Standard size Post-It Notes (several pads per table)
  Bring the following materials for use by you:
    - Chart paper Markers (at least one of each color: red, blue, green, black)
    - Chart paper
      - Two pieces will be needed during the Connecting Wrap-up/Debrief
      - Four pieces will need to be hung around the room for Learning Activity 1, labeled Frequent, Focused, Varied (observations inside and outside the classroom), and Useful and Timely Feedback
Regulatory Requirements

Regulatory Requirements: Part II School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide (Page 33)

The educator evaluation regulations require that the evaluation cycle includes implementation of the Educator Pan as per 603 CMR 35.06(04). It is the educator’s responsibility to attain the goals in the plan and to participate in any trainings and professional development provided through the state, district or other providers in accordance with the Educator Plan.

The regulations require the use of multiple categories of evidence, including:

- Multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement*;
- Judgments based on observations and artifacts of professional practice, including unannounced observations of practice of any duration; and
- Additional evidence relevant to one of more Professional Standards**(35.07(1)).

The additional evidence related to one or more performance standard must include evidence collected by the educator and presented to the evaluator relating to fulfilling professional responsibilities and family outreach and engagement 935.07(1)(c)1.

During the implementation of the Educator Plan, evaluators and educators compile evidence to be used in formative assessments and evaluations and summative evaluations.

*This use of multiple measures of student learning, growth and achievement noted above is solely for the purposes of determining a performance rating on Standards and overall. District-determined measures of student learning, growth and achievement will also be used to determine a “Rating of Impact on Student Learning,” but that use of multiple measures is addressed as Part of VII of the Massachusetts Model System for Teacher Evaluation.

**This additional evidence noted above will incorporate staff feedback (with respect to administrators) and student feedback beginning in 2013-14.

Model System Resources

Model system resources can be found on ESE’s website, at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/. Specific resources that are useful to review before facilitating this training include:

Part II: School-Level Planning and Implementation Guide

- Implementation of the Plan (p. 32)
- Strategies and Suggestions for Observation (p. 39)

Part III: Guide to Rubrics and Model Rubrics for Superintendent, Administrator and Teacher

- Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice (pp. C-2 – C-15)
I. Welcome (5 minutes)

Slide 1 is the title slide.

During this slide, welcome participants, introduce yourself, and ask participants to briefly do the same with their first name and role. If the group is large, ask for a quick identification of school teams by school.

*Explain:*

“This module provides the opportunity for participants to understand the role of observation in the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation and to examine a new model and methodology for collecting evidence of educator performance via frequent, unannounced observations.”

*Explain:*

“The agenda for today includes connecting this module to the rest in the series and learning more about the expectations and role of observation as a source of evidence that is essential to improving practice and student learning.

“You will notice that the agenda ends a little differently than previous modules. For the third hour of the module, instead of focusing on how to implement this at your school, there is an opportunity to practice by viewing another video, taking notes and identifying what feedback to give to the educator.”

*Explain:*

“An important note of consideration. This module is intended to be an introduction to the concept of short, frequent observations and the provision of feedback and is intended for a variety of educators. The content will not provide evaluators with more comprehensive training associated with calibrating observations and establishing inter-rater reliability among a group of evaluators. Additional training related to these evaluator skills is encouraged.”
II. Connecting (25 minutes)

Connecting Content (5 minutes)

Slide 4 is the title slide for the Connecting section.

*Explain:*  
“At the end of this module, you will be able to describe and delineate best practices in using observation as one of multiple sources of evidence in educator evaluation and craft timely, targeted feedback that is evidence-based and grounded in the Standards of effective practice.”

*Explain:*  
“Observations are part of Step 3 of the 5-Step Cycle of evaluation, Implementation of the Plan. The Implementation of the Plan begins as soon as Educator Plans are finalized and continues until the end of the cycle and the summative evaluation occurs. In Module 5 you learned about gathering and organizing multiple types of evidence related to educator performance. Today our focus is on observations as one more source of evidence, and the role of feedback in promoting growth and development.”

Connecting Activity: Expert Voices on Observation (15 minutes)

**Purpose and intended outcomes:**

The purpose of this activity is to collaboratively identify the purpose and use of observation and its role in the Model System and to connect the Model System rationale to research and experts’ view on observation.

**Facilitation notes:**

It is highly recommended that the facilitator do this activity him or herself before presenting it to participants; it will make the facilitation stronger.

Each table will be assigned to read one of two articles. It should be easy to count off the tables quickly during the activity. Tables numbered 1 will read the article on Handout 1. Tables numbered 2 will read the article on Handout 2. Both articles are included in the participant handout packet.

Participants will read the article identifying key words and phrases related to the use of observation and feedback. Then table groups will share their key words and phrases. Each table group will share out their words and the facilitator will record main ideas on two pieces of chart paper, one for each article.
Activity detail:

Explain the purpose of the activity:

“The design of the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation is intentionally grounded in relevant research that documents and represents best practice. When it comes to using observations in an effective, meaningful manner, research finds that:

- Evaluators need multiple opportunities and settings to observe and assess educator practice, and
- Multiple observations paired with timely feedback are a key part of a strong evaluation system.”

“The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation recommends frequent, unannounced observations of individual educators throughout the year as a way to observe practice over time and promote ongoing communication around teaching and learning. For those educators who are in the early stages of their career or educators who are struggling, the Model recommends one or two formal, announced observations as well as a means of providing additional, more targeted support. But the emphasis—and the real shift in practice—is the incorporation of multiple, short observations over time.”

Explain:

“In the past, all observations tended to be limited in number (infrequent), yet often served as the sole source of evidence for an educator’s evaluation. This approach to observation and evaluation produces extremely limited information about practice is of little value to the educator when it comes to individualized, continuous improvement. A growing body of research is now dispelling the value of traditional, “bell-to-bell” observations and promoting more frequent, targeted “mini” observations as integral to improving educator practice and student learning.

“In our first activity, you will have an opportunity to dip your toe into some of this research on the value of frequent classroom observations followed by targeted feedback.”

Explain:

“Please turn to the first few pages of your Participant Handout packet. You will see two articles: the first is a summary of two recent reports on the effect of frequent observations in Cincinnati Public Schools’ teacher evaluation model. There are some differences between the program implemented in Cincinnati and what we are doing in Massachusetts, but the research on the effectiveness of observations as part of teacher evaluation is very relevant.

“The second article is a short piece by Kim Marshall on how to conduct
mini observations. When Kim Marshall was a principal in Boston, he used multiple observations to build stronger norms of feedback into the regular life of teachers in his building.

“Both articles are included so everyone will have a copy of each article. You will only read one article, so let’s have each table count off as either a 1 or 2.”

Allow tables to count off, pointing at each table and counting off as well.

Explain:

“Tables that were 1s will read the article on Handout 1. Tables that were 2s will read the article on Handout 2.

“As you read, underline statements you find to be important takeaways or themes from the article and then circle one word or phrase that represents the key takeaway or theme.

“Any questions?” (Pause for questions)

“You will have about 5-10 minutes to read the article and underline and circle the text. Go ahead and get started.”

Give participants 5-10 minutes to read the text they were assigned. Monitor the time and call for the group’s attention after four minutes, to see if additional time is needed. Provide a one-minute warning and then bring the group back together after 5-10 minutes.

Explain:

“Now, select a recorder at your table to keep track of your group’s collective list of important words and phrases, and then share your individual responses in a quick conversation within your group. Keep in mind that this activity is not about reaching group consensus, but how the author’s work resonated with those at your table. Please listen to your colleagues’ explanation of why they selected particular key words or phrases.”
Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants may ask: Are we not supposed to conduct formal announced observation?</td>
<td>Respond by saying that both announced and unannounced observations have a role in educator evaluation. The Massachusetts Model Evaluation System supports a range of methodologies for evaluators to use that can be applied situationally to reflect the needs of the educator. For example, the Model System recommends one to two formal observations for new or struggling educators, depending on their status, in addition to the brief, unannounced observations in order to provide additional support where needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants may want to discuss how this would look in practice.</td>
<td>Respond by encouraging each school team to complete the homework assignment at the conclusion of this module, which will allow them to discuss and plan what an annual schedule of observations might look like in their school context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connecting Wrap-up/Debrief (5 minutes)

Call for the group’s attention after 6-8 minutes.

*Explain:* Let’s share what we just discussed. We’ll take it one table at a time. As we proceed, if another group has already captured ideas from your group just let us know so we can track our coherence and then report any words/phrases that have not been shared.

As groups report, the facilitator should jot down key words and phrases from each article on a piece of chart paper, using one piece of paper for each article.

*Guiding Questions:*

- What are the key messages and ideas in the two articles with regard to observations and feedback?
- Based on what we just read, what are some best practices for observations and feedback?
Some key messages that participants may identify from the two articles are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Some Key Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Sawchuk Article** | *NOTE: this article highlights the relationship between a systematic evaluation process that includes multiple observations and improved teaching and student learning outcomes*  
  - High overall teaching practice can improve student achievement.  
  - Compared to student achievement in years prior to being evaluated, student performance in math increased during the year the teacher was evaluated, *during which time the teacher was observed four times and rated on a 4-point scale*.  
  - Statistically significant student achievement gains in math continued in years after the teacher observation. |
| (Handout 1)        |                                                                                                                                                   |
| **Marshal Article** | *NOTE: this article highlights the process of short, frequent observations and the value of feedback to teacher practice*  
  - 5 minutes is enough to capture rich information about practice  
  - Face-to-face feedback that is thoughtful and prompt is key.  
  - Marshal had a goal of conducting five short informal observations each day.  
  - The focus for a short observation can be targeted—"short mental checklist." |
| (Handout 2)        |                                                                                                                                                   |
III. Learning (1 hour 30 minutes)

Learning Content 1 (5 minutes)

Slide 11 is the title slide for the Learning section.

*Explain:*

“The Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching and Administrative Leadership Practice, as represented in the Model rubrics, represent the full scope of a teacher’s or leader’s performance. This includes not only the teaching and leading aspects of practice but engagement with families and the community and professionalism.

“Not all of these aspects of practice are observable, however. Individual lesson planning or aspects of family communication may take place behind the scenes, for example. Those are areas for which educators and evaluators will want to seek out and provide artifacts to demonstrate practice, like what we reviewed in Module 5. Given this comprehensive nature of the rubrics, it’s important to realize that they are not designed to be, nor can they serve as, observation tools. Just imagine walking into a classroom with a 15 page rubric and trying to look for evidence of all 33 elements in five to ten minutes!”

*Explain:*

“That said, observation continues to be an important strategy for gathering evidence of educator practice. This includes observations of teacher and principal practice both inside and outside of the classroom. From classroom lessons to grade level meetings to school assemblies, opportunities to observe practice are abundant throughout the school day, and taking advantage of them provides a richer, more complete picture of educator practice. This doesn’t mean the educators are always under a microscope. This new approach to observation simply broadens the opportunities to observe practice beyond the four walls of a classroom.

“In addition to the examples on the slide, what are some other examples of observable practice that you might look for?”

Solicit some responses from the whole group.
“There are certain principles that evaluators should be aware of as they approach conducting short, frequent, unannounced observations, especially if this represents a change from their past observations work. In the first learning activity we will examine four principles of high quality brief observations: frequent, focused, varied, and resulting in useful and timely feedback.”

Learning Activity 1: Approaching Short Frequent Observations (15 minutes)

Purpose and intended outcomes:

Connect participants’ ideas about observation to four broader guiding principles: frequent, focused, varied (inside and outside the classroom), and resulting in useful and timely feedback.

Facilitation Details:

The facilitator will need four charts posted in the room with the following headers:

- Frequent (red marker with chart)
- Focused (blue marker with chart)
- Varied (observations inside and outside the classroom) (green marker with chart)
- Useful and Timely Feedback (orange marker with chart)

See example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During this activity, participants will count off by 4s with each number going to a different chart. The purpose of this facilitation strategy is to get participants out of their seats for a bit and interacting with people other than those in their school group.

In some cases, it may not be feasible for this exact facilitation to work effectively. If the group is too large, such that it results in more than six people per group, the facilitator could divide the participants into eight groups and create eight pieces of chart paper (doubling up on each of the topics). If it is not possible to use chart paper in the space, the facilitator could consider having participants work in table groups.

**Activity detail:**

Have participants identify which group they are in by counting off by fours.

*Explain:*

“Quickly, within your tables, I’d like everyone to count off by 4s. Okay? Go.

“Each numbered group is going to be assigned to a chart labeled with one of the principles for brief observations. I’d like everyone to stand up and make your way over to your chart. 1s should head over to the chart titled “frequent.” 2s should gather around the chart labeled “focused.” 3s head over to the chart titled “varied,” and 4s will start at the chart labeled “feedback.”

Allow participants about 2 minutes to re-sort into their new standing groups.

*Explain:*

“With your new group, brainstorm responses to the following questions:

- What does it mean to be ________ in your observations?
- How does this principle of high-quality observations better support the improvement of teaching and learning?

"Have one person record your responses to each question on the chart paper. After a few minutes, I’m going to signal for each group to move the next chart, at which point you should review what the prior group has recorded. Circle any notes or phrases you feel are most important, and add any additional thoughts to the chart. Each group will have the opportunity to review each of the four principles.

“Ready to begin? Let’s get started.”

Signal groups to move to the second chart after 3-4 minutes. Participants will need less time at each subsequent chart, since they will be working with more existing information. Stay aware of participant pace and adjust the time they have at each station accordingly.

*Explain:*

“Now that you have returned to your original chart, take two minutes to synthesize the ideas and be prepared to report out 2 or 3 key ideas that were generated. On your charts star the two or three ideas you will be sharing.”

Give participants two minutes to complete this task.
“We will take the next four minutes for groups to share two key ideas that you have for your guiding principle.”

Call on each group.

**Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacing of the activity</td>
<td>You will need to really watch the time and keep groups moving. You won’t be able to monitor all groups at the same time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Questions:**

- What does it mean to be _______ in your observations?
- How does this principle of high-quality observations better support the improvement of teaching and learning?
Some possible answers for each of the topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles of unannounced observations</th>
<th>1. What does it mean for this principle to be present</th>
<th>2. How does this principle of high-quality observations better support the improvement of teaching and learning?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Frequent                               | • Practice is observed several times throughout the year  
  • Evaluators get a better sense of a teacher's everyday practice  
  • Evaluators have a better sense of practice schoolwide | • Frequent observations throughout the year yield a more accurate and comprehensive picture of practice  
  • Frequent observations help evaluator see trends and patterns in practice, which then helps them shape better feedback and identify evidence of improvement |
| Focused                                | • Evaluators can focus on a teacher's goal areas  
  • Each observation looks at a few targeted areas, not the full Teacher Rubric | • Observations that focus on an individual educator's goals or specific areas of practice result in more targeted, actionable feedback. |
| Varied (observations inside and outside the classroom) | • Observations include the full range of a teacher's practice, not just in the classroom  
  • Evaluators can observe educators in other settings, such as PLC and team meetings, or student support in non-classroom settings | • Observation evidence from varied settings results in a more comprehensive picture of practice and helps the evaluator engage in more informed conversations about practice and resources with the educator. |
| Useful and Timely Feedback             | • Teachers get feedback shortly after the observation  
  • Feedback identifies specific ways to improve their practice  
  • Evaluators can return to classrooms and look for improvement in teacher practice | • Feedback that is timely and targeted facilitates immediate changes in practice that can have a direct effect on instruction and student learning. |
Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 1 (5 minutes)

As you wrap up the group discussion, ask: "What is the bottom line about these four principles? What idea has really jumped out at you?"

*Explain:*

"While this methodology represents a change in the way observations have traditionally been approached, short frequent unannounced observations can yield a great deal of useful information and many more samples of practice to support powerful conversations about educator practice."

*Transition and Explain:*

"In the next 30-40 minutes, we are actually going to conduct an observation using a short video. You will be able to see what it feels like to take notes during a short, unannounced classroom visit, and then generate targeted, evidence-based feedback for the teacher. As you’ll see, the quality of your feedback relates directly to what you capture during your observation, so we’ll start with how to approach the collection of high-quality evidence during an observation."

Learning Content 2 (5 minutes)

*Explain:*

"Before jumping into our first video observation, let’s go over a few key things to consider when collecting evidence from a short, unannounced observation.

“First and foremost, identify a focus ahead of time. It's critical to focus on one or two areas related to that educator’s practice during each observation. Before you enter that classroom or join that meeting, take a moment to re-familiarize yourself with that educator’s goals. What do you want or expect to see from this particular teacher at this point in the year? A targeted Standard or Indicator, or progress toward one or two of the educator’s goals becomes your “short mental checklist,” as Kim Marshall would say."

*Explain:*

“Next, remember to record evidence during your observation, not judgment. As an observer, it’s important to write concrete evidence statements that describe what the teacher and students are doing, not how you feel about it. We talked about the difference between fact and opinion in Module 5 and even practiced turning opinion statements into factual statements. There are a couple more examples here on slide 16. You will notice a direct quote from the teacher versus an opinion statement about what the teacher was doing – direct quotes are a great way to capture evidence. Opinion statements may be something you eventually use as feedback, but the evidence statement on the left is
what you would record during the observation.”

Explain:

“Finally, it’s helpful to adopt one or two note-taking strategies that facilitate quick short-hand. Here is a sample excerpt of observation notes. If we look at the slide, we see that the evaluator has used abbreviations such as: T (teacher), S (student), FFL (focus for learning), LD (lesson delivery), as well as time stamps at the bottom.

“Choosing a few easy to decipher abbreviations, such as “S” for student and “T” for teacher, recording key conversations verbatim if possible, or paraphrasing around short quotes that convey the tone and spirit of the interaction are all good note-taking strategies during short observations.”

Learning Activity 2: Video Practice – Short and Sweet (25 minutes)

Purpose and intended outcomes:

Practice gathering evidence during a brief, unannounced observation of a classroom lesson and provide guidance on organizing the evidence afterwards.

Facilitation Notes:

It is highly recommended that the facilitator do this activity him or herself before presenting it to participants. This will ensure better facilitation and allow the facilitator to give personal and authentic examples that are based on the video.

Provide the following background about the video:

Explain:

“Now we’re going to stop by Kelli’s 4th grade math classroom for a quick 9-minute observation. Kelli is an experienced educator on a Self-Directed Growth Plan. Kelli’s goals focus on:

1. Improving students’ understanding of place value and properties of operations in order to perform multi-digit arithmetic (Standard 4.NBT.4-6); and
2. Using instructional practices that engage all students during independent or small group work time (Indicators II-A and II-B).

“Remember, the first thing to do prior to an observation is to identify a focus. For this observation, we’re going to focus on evidence related to Kelli’s second goal, which is her professional practice goal. Go ahead and turn to Handout 3 in your packet. You can see it includes a 2-page
excerpt from the Teacher Rubric showing the sections of the rubric related to this goal. See the two elements that are already circled? Take a second to read the descriptions or practice in the Proficient column for those two elements, just to remind you of what you might be looking for in Kelli’s instruction.

While participants review Handout 3, facilitator should get the video clip ready.

“Ready? We’re going to pretend we are Kelli’s principal now, walking into her room for a second unannounced observation this year. Grab a blank piece of paper, an iPad, or your laptop—whatever is available to you—and be ready to capture evidence as you enter the room. This video runs for about nine minutes and starts in the middle of Kelli’s lesson. Watch, listen, and write. You’ll see immediately that she’s conducting a lesson that involves small group work, so be prepared to take notes on her second goal: engaging all students during independent or small group work time.

“You’ve just familiarized yourself with two relevant elements from the rubric, so you have an idea of what to look for. Feel free to jot down other things you observe that jump out at you as relevant or compelling, but remember—having a focus is important in brief observations.”

“Everyone ready? Okay, here we go . . .”

Show the queued-up video segment (approximately 9 minutes). During the video, the facilitator should also take notes by watching the video and writing evidence.

Explain:

“Okay, before we start discussing what we just observed, I’d like everyone to locate Handout 4 in your packet. This is the Observation Evidence Collection Tool that Kelli’s principal used during this observation. This may look familiar to you from Module 5. The Observation Evidence Collection Tool is designed to help evaluators document key evidence from observations in a way that facilitates the organization of that evidence, as well as the development of feedback based on that evidence.

“You can see that Kelli’s principal was able to record the following information:

- Details of the observation (number, date, time, location)
- Notes collected during the observation
- the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice to which various aspects of Kelli’s practice align

“There’s also space at the bottom to construct written feedback. While it is recommended that feedback be face-to-face, it will still be important to the overall evaluation process to formally record feedback.”
"At this point, I'd like you to work in a small group—two to three people—and start to compare and discuss the principal's notes on the completed Observation Tool versus what you jotted down. Identify those points where your evidence matches as well as any different or additional evidence you may have collected. Don't worry about the Standard/Indicator notations in the right-hand column—we'll get to those later."

Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge(s)</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants may get distracted or hung up on how the principal took notes, especially if their format, shorthand or notes took a different form than that of the teacher.</td>
<td>Remind participants that the purpose of the activity is to focus on what we saw. The principal's notes are not meant to be an exemplar, but rather an example. There are many effective ways to take observation notes and the focus should be on the participant finding a strategy that works for him/her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants may have missed things that the example principal chose to write down or feel that they were not able to capture in writing everything that they saw during the observation.</td>
<td>Tell participants that conducting observations is a skill that must be practiced, especially when using a new rubric. As they become more familiar with the rubric and more comfortable taking observation notes during these short observations, they will feel more confident. In order to gain confidence, they can always practice observing classrooms in their school for a week without including those observations in the teachers' evaluation (of course sharing this information with the teachers).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guiding Questions:

- Did you see the same things her principal saw?
- What did her principal miss that you noticed?
- What evidence did you see related to Kelli's second goal, on a collaborative learning environment?
- Did you note any evidence related to her first goal or other Standards and Indicators?
Facilitator Note:

Facilitator should roam during this small group discussion and provide support and guidance to groups as their exchanges unfold.

Some evidence that participants may have seen in the video clip related to Kelli’s second goal on a collaborative learning environment includes:

- Students were working in groups throughout the observation.
- Students were instructed to ask other classmates in their group for help before asking the teacher, encouraging collaboration.
- The teacher explicitly reminded one student to ask three group members first before asking her.
- The teacher paired two students up, facilitating them working together, when they were approaching the problem using a similar strategy.
- Students were in same-gender groups—deliberate?

Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 2 (10 minutes)

Call for the group’s attention after 5 minutes.

Ask the participants the following questions, allowing time for individuals or groups to raise their hands and respond.

- What evidence did you see related to Kelli’s second goal, on a collaborative learning environment?
- Did you see the same things her principal saw?
- What did her principal miss that you noted?
- What evidence did you see of other Standards, Indicators or goals?

“You probably noticed in the principal’s observation notes that she found evidence of three indicators during the observation. Although a focus is critical to have when conducting a short observation, you’ll often see evidence of practice related to other goals or Indicators. Don’t shy away from noting them.”

Explain:

“We’ve now had an opportunity to experience a brief classroom observation and collect some evidence of practice. The next step is to turn this evidence into feedback that’s targeted and helpful to the teacher.”
Learning Content 3 (5 minutes)

Explain:

“The purpose of feedback is to help educators improve their practice. Providing feedback to educators on a regular basis supports frequent opportunities for conversation between the educator and their evaluator around instruction, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement.

“When done well, this process can have marked, long-lasting changes on teacher practice and student outcomes. According to a multi-year study of Cincinnati Public School’s evaluation framework, in which teachers were observed 4-6 times per year and provided targeted feedback each time, teachers learned new information about their own performance and developed new skills. Not only did evidence show teachers sustaining these behavioral changes from year to year, these teachers were more effective at raising student achievement during the school year when they were being evaluated than they were previously, and even more effective in subsequent years.

“Researchers attributed these outcomes to the focused observations and feedback routines of the evaluation process, as well as increased opportunities for self-reflection and conversations regarding effective teaching practice. Perhaps most illuminating was the suggestion that regular, targeted feedback was actually more important to lasting performance improvements than the final, overall [evaluation] scores at the end of the year (Taylor & Tyler, 2012). Bottom line: we can’t emphasize the importance of feedback to the continuous improvement of educators enough.”

Explain:

“If we want to make sure to give teachers effective feedback, what does that look like?

“Effective feedback is FOCUSED: feedback should zero in on what you just observed and how that practice reflects the educator’s progress toward his/her goals or performance within the four standards of practice.

“Effective feedback is EVIDENCE-BASED: feedback should be grounded in evidence related to what was just observed.

“Effective feedback is CONSTRUCTIVE: Feedback should both reinforce evidence of effective practice and identify areas for continued growth, with suggestions for improvement and/or the identification of additional resources or supports if needed.

“Finally, effective feedback must be provided in a TIMELY manner to be effective. It is not helpful to receive constructive feedback weeks after the observation. Ideally feedback should be provided within two or three
days after the observation.

“Let’s go back to Kelli in order to see how her principal might have constructed his feedback based on this recent observation.”

**Learning Activity 3: Providing Useful and Timely Feedback (15 minutes)**

**Purpose and intended outcomes:**

Provide an opportunity for participants to utilize multiple sources of evidence, and to identify two areas of feedback based on their observation and knowledge of Kelli’s goals.

**Facilitation Notes:**

The facilitator should make sure to complete this activity him or herself before doing it with participants, identifying two points of feedback for Kelli. It is a critical step that will help strengthen activity facilitation.

**Activity Detail:**

*Explain:*

“As you think about Kelli’s goals in her Educator Plan, you will want to provide feedback to Kelli that reinforces evidence of effective practice related to one or more of her goals so it’s relevant to her work going forward. Linking this feedback to specific Standards and Indicators from the teacher rubric will help to ground your feedback in concrete descriptions of effective practice and focus her in self-reflection about next steps.

*Explain:*

“Let’s go back to Handouts 3 and 4 in your packet, the Observation Collection Tool and the 2-page excerpt from the Teacher Rubric.”

“During the observation, we all focused on practice related to Kelli’s professional practice goal: to increase the engagement of students in independent and small group work time. We definitely saw evidence of practice related to this goal. Using the evidence we collected from our observation, the next step is to ground our feedback in what we saw, and what effective practice looks like.

“This is where the rubric comes in again. It’s the guidepost we use to assess practice based on what we just observed. What should it look like to support a collaborative learning environment? Is Kelli effectively motivating and engaging students through small groups? The 2-page excerpt you have from the Model Teacher Rubric includes descriptions of practice related to her goal that can help to frame your feedback. For example, we observed a couple examples of routines or rituals that Kelli used to maintain a safe, productive learning environment throughout the lesson, practice that is encapsulated in Indicator B, element 1. Remember “Mona. [Lisa.] Mona. [Lisa.]”? Another tactic might have been the same-gender grouping of students, but it’s hard to know. If this was something I wanted to highlight, I might construct feedback like,

'I noticed some ways in which you captured the students’ attention and controlled behaviors that might have interfered with learning. The “Mona/Lisa” technique was particularly effective in re-capturing the students’ attention—nice job. I’m also curious about the same-gender grouping—do you
find this approach to be helpful in promoting a safe intellectual environment?

“Notice how I situated evidence from my observation in the description of practice from the rubric? This is just one example of how you might use the rubric to help anchor your feedback. Let’s try it ourselves.”

**Explain:**

“Remember that this feedback might be a “stand-up conversation” followed by a written note or simply an email. I would like you to focus on written feedback for this activity.

“On your own, you’re going to review your notes from the observation and start flagging evidence of practice that stands out in relation to Kelli’s goal: *using instructional practices that engage all students during independent or small group work time.* Remember to identify points of strength as well as areas that may need follow-up or improvement.

“Then, using the rubric excerpt in Handout 3, see if you can locate what you saw in Kelli’s classroom in the descriptors of practice. You’ll see two elements already circled: II-A-2 (student engagement) and II-B-2 (collaborative learning environment). These are the elements most directly related to Kelli’s goal, but don’t be afraid to utilize other elements to ground your feedback, where relevant. *The purpose of feedback is to help Kelli see where her practice lies along the continuum, and what she can do to improve.***

“You will have 10 minutes to draft two points of feedback for Kelli. Feel free to write directly into the box on Handout 4 titled ‘Feedback to the Educator.’”

Cue individuals at eight minutes that they have two minutes left.

**Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge(s)</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It will be difficult to monitor participants to ensure that they are completing the exercise.</td>
<td>Rotate among as many tables as possible to ensure participants are completing the work and prompt individuals as needed. By this time you may also be able to observe school teams who are comfortable with the content that has been introduced versus teams who are really struggling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups may have trouble starting.</td>
<td>If it looks as though teams are struggling to get started, suggest that they work in pairs to draft two points of feedback, rather than individually.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding Questions:**

- Is the feedback focused, evidence-based, and constructive?
Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 3 (5 minutes)

*Explain:*

“By now, you’ve hopefully drafted a couple points of feedback for Kelli, using your own observation notes as well as the rubric. Take a few minutes in your teams and share your feedback statements. Individuals may have zeroed in on different aspects of Kelli’s practice around which to give feedback, or you might discover similar ideas for feedback among your group.

“Remember to ask yourselves, ‘Is the feedback focused, evidence-based, and constructive?’”

After a few minutes of small group discussion, bring the entire group back together for a whole group discussion about what they identified as feedback for Kelli.

*Transition and Explain:*

“As we have worked through the three learning activities we have focused on the four principles of high quality brief observations; we gained practice conducting a short, unannounced observation and collected and recorded key evidence; and we also practiced providing focused, evidence-based and constructive.

“You probably noted that we did not rate Kelli’s practice today. Although you might have situated your feedback to Kelli in the language of the rubric, you did not at any point in time record or submit a rating of “proficient” or “needs improvement.” This is an important point to take home with you: the rubric is there as a guide for your observations and can help you situate an educator’s practice within the four performance levels at any given time.

“Remember, the purpose of conducting several observations over the course of time is to construct a more comprehensive picture of practice, rather than rating a point-in-time snap shot. Eventually, an evaluator will sit down with multiple pieces of evidence, from artifacts to observation notes, and assess them in their totality in order to arrive at an informed performance rating.”
**IV. Learning – Part II (55 minutes)**

**Learning Activity 4: Video and Feedback Practice (50 minutes)**

Slide 24 is the title slide for the Learning – Part II section.

**Purpose and intended outcomes:**

The purpose of this activity is to give participants another opportunity to observe a short video clip and draft feedback to the teacher, using his goals and the Teacher Rubric.

It is going to take evaluators several observations to become comfortable with the new Teacher Rubric and observation form, which is why this activity provided.

**Facilitation Notes:**

To prepare for this activity, the facilitator should complete the full activity him or herself, to ensure stronger facilitation and allow them to guide others more effectively.

**Activity Detail:**

**Transition:**

“This next activity provides you with an opportunity to practice taking observation notes during a short observation and providing the teacher with appropriate feedback based on evidence of practice related to his goals and performance standards from the Teacher Rubric. Before we begin, I’d like everyone to locate two items for use during this observation: Handout 5 in your packets, which is a blank observation collection tool, and Handout 6, which is an excerpt from the Teacher Rubric. Have these ready to go.”

**Explain:**

“We’re about to meet Chuck, a 10th grade physics teacher. It’s the third week of school, and this is the principal’s first visit to Chuck’s classroom this year.

“Another important note about Chuck is that he is a non-PTS teacher in his third year of teaching. This is a critical year for him—he must be rated Proficient overall in order to receive professional teaching status.

“Let’s talk a little bit about Chuck’s goals for this year. The science department at Chuck’s school is focusing on scientific literacy this year as part of their school’s implementation of the revised MA Curricular Frameworks. For Chuck, this means helping his 10th grade students learn how to analyze, interpret and communicate results of scientific investigations that use multiple variables, with a specific emphasis on teaching students how to translate quantitative or technical information..."
expressed visually (e.g., a table or chart) into words using appropriate terminology and phrases. Chuck’s student learning goal uses writing assessments to gauge students’ ability to meet this standard.

“Chuck’s professional practice goal focuses on creating a safe learning environment and collaborative learning environment. As a non-PTS teacher, Chuck is still working on strengthening his classroom culture.”

*Explain:*

“We are going to watch a nine minute video clip from Chuck’s classroom. Before we enter the room, however, imagine you’re his principal and you’re putting together materials for a day that will include several observations. Before entering his classroom, you'll want to review his goals, and take a quick look at where they exist in the rubric, so you have a focus for when you walk into Chuck’s room. What exactly are you going to be looking for?”

“I’d like everyone to take out Handout 7, which is an excerpt from the Teachers Rubric, and turn to an elbow partner and do this thinking together. This excerpt includes the first two Standards for Effective Teaching Practice and their related Indicators. Once again, you’ll see a few elements that have been circled for you—these elements align pretty closely to each of Chuck’s two goals.

“As a pair, take a few minutes to familiarize yourselves with the relevant Indicators, and jot down two areas of focus for this observation. You’ll see a space for this on the Observation Collection Tool just above the note taking box, titled **Intended Observation Focus**. Make sure you agree on what you’re both going to look for. Your focus doesn’t have to be very detailed—just a general sense of what type(s) of practice you expect to see from Chuck, given one or both goals. Everyone take a few minutes to do this.”

After three to five minutes, bring the group back together.

“Okay. You’ve got your foci. Handout 6 is a blank observation collection sheet on which to jot notes. You can use another method for note-taking if you’d like – whatever is most comfortable to you.

“Alright, let’s meet Chuck.”

Play the video at this point. After the video has ended, give participants another minute or so to finish up their notes.

*Explain:*

“Okay everyone. Quick show of hands—how many of you saw evidence of his student learning goal? How many of you saw evidence of his professional practice goal related to cultivating a safe and collaborative learning environment?

“Now that you have your notes, take about 10 minutes and work with your partner to compare your notes from the video. You started with the same focus but probably noted additional things outside that focus as well. Using the rubric excerpt, work together to assign your evidence statements to a Standard and Indicator from the rubric, like was shown
Give participants about 10 minutes to complete this task. After nine minutes, give participants a one-minute warning.

**Explain:**

“Let’s have a couple of groups share out some evidence they saw of Chuck’s goals.

Ask: “What evidence did you see of Chuck’s student learning goal related to teaching students how to translate quantitative or technical information expressed visually (e.g., a table or chart) into words using appropriate terminology and phrases? Where in the rubric does this kind of instructional practice reside?”

Allow a few groups to respond.

Ask: “What evidence did you see of Chuck’s professional practice goal related to creating a safe and collaborative learning environment? Which Indicators or elements in the rubric describe this practice?”

Allow a few groups to respond.

**Explain:**

“Last step. We’re still in the principal’s shoes. You’ve now returned to your office later in the day and are reviewing your notes from Chuck’s classroom. Using the evidence you compiled from this observation, I’d like you to work with your partner for the next 10 minutes to draft two to three pieces of feedback for Chuck.

“Remember to consider the key components of effective feedback during this last step: feedback should be FOCUSED on what you observed, EVIDENCE-BASED, and CONSTRUCTIVE. You’ve already identified places in the rubric that align with what you observed, so use those descriptors of practice to help ground your feedback. Any questions?”

Give participants 10 minutes to finish this task.
Common facilitation challenges and solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Solution(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will struggle to align observation statements with standards and indicators on the rubric.</td>
<td>Make sure as the facilitator you know the basic types of observation statements to be made about the video and the standards and indicators they align with. Guide the participants toward these kinds of observation statements/evidence and then toward the rubric.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants create feedback that is still too general, unhelpful, or not constructive.</td>
<td>Remember that giving good feedback takes a lot of practice. Invite groups to remember the 4 aspects of good feedback and for members of the group to practice giving feedback about feedback using these principles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After participants have had 10 minutes to draft their feedback for Chuck, bring the entire group back together for a brief whole group discussion around what kinds of evidence-based feedback would be constructive and helpful to Chuck going forward.

Guiding questions for discussion:

- What are a two to three pieces of feedback you would give to Chuck about this observation?

Learning Wrap-up/Debrief 4 (5 minutes)

*Explain:*

“Today’s module introduced the idea of conducting short, unannounced observations as part of teacher evaluation. You were even able to practice conducting a couple of shorter observations that had a targeted focus. How did this experience of conducting a short observation differ from what you previously did at your school?”

Allow participants to answer.

*Ask:*

“How did our discussion of feedback help to expand your understanding of effective feedback?”

Allow participants to answer.

*Ask:*

“In today’s module we put together a lot of different pieces of the 5 Step Evaluation Cycle, including goals, evidence, the Model System Teacher Rubric and feedback. What is the main takeaway you are going to bring back to your school as a result of this Module?”

Allow participants to answer.
VI. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Slide 29 is the introductory slide to the wrap-up section.

The homework assignments for this module will help prepare participants to start engaging in observations back at their schools. There are two homework assignments: one for school leadership teams and one for teachers. The homework assignments for this session are described on Slides 30 and 31.

**Suggested Homework**

School leadership teams and evaluators can begin planning for implementation by creating an annual schedule of observations at the school.

*Explain:*

“While the homework is certainly not mandatory, we think it’s a valuable opportunity for school leadership teams to continue the discussion and work we started today. Your suggested homework is to begin planning an annual schedule for observations that takes into account the number of educators and evaluators at your school.”

The homework assignment for school leadership teams to present to all school-based educators is described on Slide 31. This slide does not need to be covered with this group of participants.

**Come to Closure**

When the homework assignment has been covered, transition to the final wrap-up, hand out the feedback form for the session, direct participants as to where they can send questions via email, and dismiss the group.

Keep this final slide on the screen as participants start to gather their things and leave the session.

*NOTE: Enter your email address on this final slide, so participants know where to send questions.*