ESE Model Observation Protocol: Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)

The Model Observation Protocol is provided as a resource and suggested framework for the pre-observation, observation, and post-observation process. Sponsoring Organizations may choose to adopt or adapt the model protocol to meet their needs, or use their own protocol that best suits their organization.

The Model Observation Protocol guides Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors through each step of the observation and feedback cycle, including:

Before the Observation	During the Observation	After the Observation
• Preparing for the pre-conference • Conducting the pre-conference	• Actively collecting evidence	• Analyzing the evidence • Identifying areas for reinforcement/refinement • Preparing for the post-conference • Conducting the post-conference

Implementation of each step will vary depending on the type observation (announced vs. unannounced) and whether one or both supervisors are participating. The supervisor will use this or a given protocol, the CAP Rubric, and the CAP Observation Form to successfully complete each observation.

Before the Observation

Before each announced observation, the candidate and supervisor(s) meet for a pre-conference. The pre-conference is an important opportunity to build rapport with the Teacher Candidate, establish a coaching relationship, and begin to collect evidence for the upcoming observation.

Preparing for the Pre-Conference

Begin by gathering and reviewing evidence, including:

- Lesson plan
- Lesson materials (e.g., assessment, handouts, etc.)
- Prior observations and feedback provided to candidate

Review the lesson plan and associated materials for evidence of the focus elements and generate a set of questions to guide the pre-conference. The Pre-Conference Planning Form can support this planning. If the observation is being conducted jointly between the Program Supervisor and Supervising Practitioner, the preparation should also be coordinated to ensure that the two observers have a unified focus and set of expectations for the observation.

The supervisor should prepare questions that are likely to:

1) Generate evidence relative to the focus element(s);
2) Clarify aspects of the planned lesson based on a review of the lesson plan and materials;
3) Prompt the candidate to reflect on and refine the planned lesson; and
4) Confirm focus areas for the observation based on candidate goals and areas for growth

Sample Pre-Conference Questions
I.A.4 Well-Structured Lessons • What do you expect students to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson? • Tell me about how you have structured the lesson in order to meet your objective(s). • How is this lesson connected to students' previous learning? • What strategies will you use to engage students in the lesson? • How do you know that your lesson is appropriately challenging for your students?
I.B.2 Adjustments to Practice • How will you check for student understanding throughout the lesson? What adjustments can you make based on those checks for understanding? • What student misunderstandings do you anticipate and how can you prepare to mitigate them? • How will you assess student learning at the end of the lesson? How will you use that assessment data to inform your next steps?
II.A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs • How will you ensure that all students have the background information, skills, or knowledge they need to be ready to master this objective? • What inclusive practices have you integrated into your lesson to accommodate diverse learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness?
II.B.1 Safe Learning Environment • Tell me about the routines and procedures that you will use during this lesson. • How will you respond to or prevent any student behaviors that could interfere with learning? • What should I look for as evidence of a safe learning environment?
II.D.2 High Expectations • What are some ways that you will be reinforcing a growth mindset for your students? • What should I look for as evidence of high expectations in your classroom?
IV.A.1 Reflective Practice • Tell me about any challenges or specific areas of the rubric that you are currently working to strengthen. • In addition to the focus elements, are there other areas of your practice on which you would like me to provide feedback?

Conducting the Pre-conference

Ideally, the pre-conference occurs one to two days prior to the observation and lasts between 15-20 minutes. A pre-conference should include the following: an introduction, a discussion based on the review of lesson materials, and a summary of next steps.

Pre-conference Introduction (2 min)

The introduction helps to set the tone and purpose of the pre-conference. While it may appear overly formal it can be valuable in establishing routines that help to keep the conversation focused and brief. Below is an example of one approach to the introduction of a pre-conference:

- Greeting: *"Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to coming into your class on _________"*
- Time: "*This discussion should take us about 20 minutes"*
- Set Purpose: *"The purpose of our conversation is for you to help me to know what I can expect to see happen during the observation and for you to know what things I am specifically looking for."*

Discussion of the Lesson (15 min)

Following the brief introduction, the supervisor should transition quickly into a discussion of the candidate's goals and plans for the lesson being observed. It is most productive when the supervisor has reviewed the lesson plan prior to this conversation and can ask specific, probing questions about the lesson and expected student learning. The candidate should do the majority of the talking during this portion of the pre-conference. The supervisors should be capturing notes on the conversation. Below is an example of one approach to the discussion:

- Reference review of materials: "*I reviewed the materials you sent me in advance and think I have a clear sense of the lesson but was hoping you could elaborate on a few points to be sure I understand your plan."*
- Ask questions: See pre-conference preparation section for examples.

Pre-conference Closure (3 min)

Supervisors should leave time at the end of the conference to summarize any takeaways from the conversation as well as align expectations for the upcoming observation. Below is an example of one approach to pre-conference closure:

- Revisit prior feedback: *"After our second observation, we agreed that you would work to [fill in] so I will be looking for evidence of that in the upcoming observation."*
- Review the focus elements: *"Also, because this is the third observation, I will also be collecting evidence specifically for element 1.B.2, which means that I will be looking for ways that you are assessing student learning throughout and at the end of the lesson and making adjustments to your practice based on that information."*
- Summarize takeaways from the conversation: *"Based on what you shared with me during our conversation, it sounds like you are also looking for feedback on your transitions so I will be sure to make note of those as well."*

During the Observation

Actively Collecting Evidence

The primary goal of the supervisor during the observation is to actively collect evidence. Active evidence collection should capture both teacher and student behavior/actions. The supervisor does not include make judgments or inferences during the observation; this occurs after when the supervisor is analyzing and synthesizing the evidence. Instead, the evidence should reflect exactly what happens in the classroom, including both summary statements and direct quotes.

There are various tools supervisors may use to collect evidence during the lesson. This could include scripting, videotaping, audio-recording, or using other commercially available applications that aid in observing specific classroom interactions.

The CAP Observation Form is not designed to be the tool used to collect evidence during the observation. Instead, it is designed to share with the candidate the most relevant and salient examples o f evidence related to the focus element(s) (see Analyzing and Categorizing Evidence). The full body of evidence collected during the observation is used to aid the supervisor in identifying trends and selecting illustrative examples of aspects of performance. It is not designed to be shared directly with the candidate nor is it collected by ESE. Individual providers may, however, decide to collect this information from supervisors for training or documentation purposes.

After the Observation

After an observation, supervisors review evidence collected, begin to analyze it as a measure of candidate performance and then strategically plan for a post-conference in which candidates are provided with targeted feedback.

Sponsoring Organizations may also consider having the candidate submit a written reflection to the supervisor(s) prior to the post-conference. See the Candidate Self-Reflection Form. If adding this step, supervisors should plan to complete their analysis prior to reviewing the candidate self-reflection.

Analyzing & Categorizing the Evidence

Following the observation, the supervisors should review the evidence collected during the lesson and begin to organize it by element to fill in the evidence chart on the CAP Observation Form. When categorizing evidence, supervisors should consider the following:

Considerations for Categorizing Evidence

- Not every piece of evidence from the observation needs to be sorted into the evidence table in the CAP Observation Form.
- It is recommended that you consult the CAP Rubric when categorizing evidence, but evidentiary statements should not simply reiterate or restate the performance descriptors; the evidentiary statement should explain what happened in the observation that shows/does not show that a skill has been demonstrated.
- Evidence may demonstrate that one or more of the dimensions (Quality, Consistency, Scope) of an element are being met OR that performance is not yet at the expected threshold. Supervisors might consider “tagging” evidence that gets included in the Observation Forms by dimension (Quality, Scope, Consistency) so that it can easily be referred to when making summative judgments.

For observations that are conducted jointly, the Program Supervisor and Supervising Practitioner should calibrate on the categorization of evidence on the CAP Observation Form as well as the identification of areas for reinforcement and refinement. This must be done prior to meeting with the candidate to ensure that the candidate receives consistent, calibrated feedback about their performance.

Identifying Reinforcement and Refinement Areas

Supervisors are asked to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement for the candidate. This does not preclude the candidate from self-identifying areas as well. Areas of reinforcement and refinement should be tied directly to the elements of the CAP rubric.

- **Reinforcement (Strengths):** The area(s) of reinforcement should identify the candidate's instructional strength in a way that encourages the continuation of effective practices in the future. The area(s) of reinforcement should be deep rooted in evidence that demonstrates successful positive impact on student learning.
- **Refinement (Areas for Improvement):** The area(s) of refinement should identify the areas in need of instructional improvement, as well as specific supports you are prepared to provide.

In reflecting on the analysis of the evidence, supervisors should select one to two (but no more than three) reinforcement and refinement areas. Supervisors are encouraged to select the reinforcement and refinement areas that are most likely to improve candidate practice and have a positive impact on student learning.

The refinement and reinforcement areas can focus on the Quality, Consistency or Scope dimension of an element. However, supervisors should not set refinement or reinforcement goals around Consistency or Scope until the candidate has successfully met the Quality threshold.

Once you have identified the areas of refinement/reinforcement fill them in at the bottom of the CAP Observation Form.

Considerations for Identifying Reinforcement and Refinement Areas

- Choose reinforcement and refinement areas for which you have sufficient and specific evidence from the lesson.
- Prioritize based on which areas have the greatest potential impact on student achievement and on other areas of the CAP rubric.
- Make sure that the reinforcement is not directly related to the refinement. It is important that candidates see their area of strength as separate from their area needing improvement.
- Select refinement topics around which you are prepared to provide specific support. There is nothing worse than telling a teacher they need to alter their practice and then not being able to provide specific examples for how this can be done.
- Understand the candidate's capacity when identifying an area of refinement. Where does the candidate have the most potential for growth?
- Reinforcements should be only to strengthen the candidate's performance. Do not hedge this part of the post-conference with qualifying statements such as "it could have been even better if," or "next time you could also do…" Teachers need to hear what they are effective at, and have it be left at that.
- When developing the post-conference plan, consider identifying the area of refinement first. This will ensure that the reinforcement and refinement do not overlap.

Preparing for the Post-Conference

The primary purpose of the post-conference is to provide candidates with feedback about their performance during the observation.

To prepare for the post-conference, supervisors will gather and review available evidence, including:

- Lesson Plan & Pre-Conference Planning Form
- Notes from Pre-Conference
- Observation Form that contains categorized evidence
- Candidate Self-Reflection Form (if required)
- Evidence of student learning (e.g. assessment data, exit tickets, student work)

Supervisors can use the Post-Conference Planning Form to organize their feedback on reinforcement and refinement areas, prepare guiding questions, and plan for targeted supports for the candidate.

Conducting the Post-Conference

Ideally, the post-conference occurs one to two days after the observation and lasts between 20-30 minutes. Post-conferences should not occur immediately after the lesson as this does not allow for sufficient time for the supervisors to synthesize and calibrate on evidence and feedback or for the candidate to adequately reflect.

A post-conference should include the following: an introduction, a discussion of reinforcement and refinement areas, and a summary of next steps.

Post-conference Introduction (5 min)

The introduction helps to set the tone and purpose of the post-conference. While it may appear overly formal it can be valuable in establishing routines that help to keep the conversation focused and brief. Below is an example of one approach to the introduction of a post-conference:

- Greeting: *"Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to our discussion on the lesson I was able to see in action. "*
- Time: "*This discussion should take us about 30 minutes"*
- Set Purpose: *"The purpose of our conversation is for us to identify both strengths and areas of improvement in your practice"*
- Probe for self-reflection: *"What are your thoughts about how the students responded to the lesson?"* OR if the candidate already completed the self-reflection form, "*I saw from your reflection that…"*

Discussion of Reinforcement/Refinement Areas (20 min)

The discussion about strengths and areas for improvement should begin with outlining the areas of reinforcement and then transition to the areas of refinement. The supervisor should provide specific examples from the observation as evidence of the area of refinement or reinforcement. Below is an example of one approach to the discussion:

- Share areas of Reinforcement:
    - Provide evidence from observation: "*There were several instances throughout the lesson where you asked a variety of questions to check for student understanding. For example, after showing the pictograph you…"*

- State impact on students: *"In doing so, students were required to justify their thinking and it allowed you to quickly identify misconceptions in students understanding."*
- Provide recommended action: "*Continue to…"*

- Share areas of Refinement:
  - Ask self-reflection question: Ask a specific question to prompt the teacher to talk about what you want him or her to improve. Utilize a question that includes specific language from the rubric, which can lead the teacher to reflect on the indicator you have identified as his/her area of refinement as it relates to the lesson. Example: "*When developing lessons, how do you decide on the pacing of the lesson so sufficient time is allocated for each segment?"*
  - Share evidence from observation: "*You mentioned earlier that you wanted students to be able to work in groups and then report their findings. However, there was not sufficient time for this to occur during the lesson. According to the observation log, the first 6 minutes was spent organizing materials and transiting students; the next 23 minutes was spent with you modeling the objective at the board with some questions and answer time built in."*
  - Provide concrete suggestions for how to improve: "*As you modeled how to analyze a pictograph, students could have worked with their group members to answer your questions prior to your providing the answer, then they could have reported to the class their findings. This would have still allowed you to model, but would have also allowed students to work together to analyze the pictograph. Students who may not have required this review could have worked independently in a group to analyze their own pictograph while the rest of the class participated in your modeling. This would have also allowed you to differentiate the pacing of the lesson to provide for students who progress at different learning rates. This lesson could also have been segmented into two different lessons."*
  - Provide recommended action: "*Moving forward…*"
  - Share resource/support: *"As you work to further refine this skill, I think it might be helpful if you go and observe Mrs. Blank in 3rd grade who is highly-skilled in this area. I've already spoken with her and she has agreed to an observation and debrief next week."*

Post-conference Closure (5 min)

Supervisors should leave time at the end of the conference to summarize any takeaways from the conversation. Below is an example of one approach to post-conference closure:

- Share Observation Form: *"I've categorized the evidence from observation as well as recorded the reinforcement and refinement areas and actions here…"*
- Leave time for questions: *"Do you have any other questions?"*
- Confirm next steps in process: "The next formal observation will be unannounced and conducted by your Supervising Practitioner. Because it is the second observation she will be focusing evidence collection on the refinement areas we discussed today as well as essential elements 1.A.4 and 2.B.1."