Leading with Learning
WestEd

Student Observation Tool
Overview and Intended Uses

All students deserve academically rich, culturally sustaining, and positive teaching and learning experiences *daily*. The *Leading with Learning Student Observation Tool* is designed for collaborative inquiry into what students are saying and doing as they are engaged in school learning tasks. The tool should be used collaboratively by teacher teams for peer coaching, by individual teachers, or in collaborative settings between teachers and coaches or principals in the context of a broader process of disciplined inquiry (e.g., by school teams in "instructional rounds"). The tool should not be used for teacher evaluation. At first, educators may want to focus on only one or two "focus areas" during a given inquiry period and use the appropriate sections of the document to gather and reflect on student observation data. All teachers in the school should have ample time to learn about the tool, opportunities to use the tool to improve their practice, and a voice in adding additional examples for each focus area. The examples for each focus area are merely examples and should not be considered prescriptive or exhaustive.

Leading with Learning's "**four daily essential practices**" help teachers and leaders to focus on the conditions that ensure optimal conditions for student learning:

Focus Area #1: Positive & Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Teaching: Students develop a sense of personal efficacy; maintain cultural identity and connections with their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups and communities; build positive relationships; and develop an ethic of success that is compatible with cultural pride.

Focus Area #2: Collaborative Discussions, Reading, and Writing: Students engage in intellectually rich and integrated learning around worthy and engaging inquiry questions, texts, and topics in ways that support deeper learning, extended academic discourse, and abundant and authentic writing

Focus Area #3: Academic Language Development: Students engage in interactive and discussion-based learning tasks about the language in complex texts, with a focus on supporting them to understand complex texts better and make informed and deliberate choices about language when speaking and writing.

Focus Area #4: Scaffolding and Student Ownership: Students develop autonomy and ownership of the learning process through scaffolding (planned and "just-in-time") and formative assessment practices that are tailored to their individual needs and that build their autonomy and ownership.

Teaching that Sustains Culture and Language

Collaborative Discussions, Reading, and Writing

4 Daily Essential Practices

Academic Language Development

Scaffolding and Student Ownership

Leading WITH Learning
WestEd

Leading with Learning Student Observation Tool

Grade Level(s): _____ Date: _____ Total # Min.: _____ Students: #total:____ #EL students: ____ #students w/special needs: ___

Lesson Topic: _____ Content Area: _____Text or Media Used: _____

Part I: Do you see an environment that is conducive to safe, caring, interactive, and intellectually rich learning? Please identify all that you see below (there can be more than one descriptor in each category).		
Classroom Set-up	**Interaction Type(s)**	**Facilitation Style(s)**

• Students in
  – Rows
  – Carpet
  – Table groups
  – Other:
	• Teacher with all students
	• Teacher with small group
	• Students in pairs
	• Students in small groups
	• Other:
		• Mostly teacher facilitated
		• Mostly student facilitated
		• Both teacher and student facilitated
		• Other:

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	**Extended Academic Conversations**	**Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Environment**
• Posted norms to promote positive interaction • Charts with examples of positive discourse and thinking moves • Other:	• Charts with academic conversation moves or language • Posted protocols or success criteria for effective group work • Other:	• Range and abundance of books • Culturally relevant literature • Bilingual books and media • Posters related to culturally sustaining topics • Other:
Student Writing		
• Posted or observed student writing reflects deep learning about a topic or text • Posted or observed student writing reflects students' own ideas or perspectives about a topic or text • Posted student writing reflects engagement in culturally and linguistically sustaining topics • Other:		

Leading WITH Learning
WestEd

Part II: Creating opportunities to learn, designed for ELs and all culturally and linguistically diverse learners

Record specific examples of what students do and say. The examples listed are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive.

Focus Area #1: Positive & Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Teaching

Students develop a sense of personal efficacy, maintain identity and connections with their ethnic groups and communities, and build positive relationships, and an ethic of success that is compatible with cultural pride.

Indicators: We can see …	Note key details of interactions you saw & heard.
• Students helping one another • Students speaking positively to and about others • Students showing empathy for others • Students working effectively in teams • Students having fun, smiling, laughing in ways that are connected to the joy of learning • Students expressing their ideas in their home dialect of English and/or primary language • Students contributing their family, community, or cultural assets and experiences to the learning • Students acknowledging and respecting diverse perspectives • Students validating and/or building on the ideas of their peers • Students discussing diversity or inclusion topics • Students discussing social justice topics • Students advocating for themselves and/or others • Other:	

Leading
WITH
Learning
WestEd

Focus Area #2: Collaborative Discussions, Reading, and Writing

Students engage in intellectually rich, integrated learning around worthy and engaging inquiry questions, texts, and topics in ways that support deeper learning, extended academic discourse, and abundant and authentic writing.

Indicators: We can see ...	Note key details of interactions you saw & heard.
• Students discussing open-ended questions about texts3 that promote deeper thinking • Students retelling/recounting/explaining stories, events, or experiences in their own words • Students explaining their thinking about an idea or reasoning about a problem • Students elaborating on or providing clarification on their ideas • Students offering their own ideas, perspectives, or opinions • Students asking their peers for clarification, elaboration, or explanation • Students making claims and using evidence to justify their reasoning • Students evaluating or critiquing the ideas of others respectfully • Other:	

Leading WITH Learning WestEd

Focus Area #3: Academic Language Development

Students engage in interactive and discussion-based learning tasks about the language in complex texts, with a focus on supporting them to understand complex texts better and make informed and deliberate choices about language when speaking and writing.

Indicators: We can see ...	Note key details of interactions you saw & heard.
• Students engaging in "language detective" or "language sleuth" work • Students discussing the purposes for using language (e.g., to inform about …, to persuade people to …, to entertain, etc.) • Students analyzing specific language features in a text (e.g., words, phrasings, text connectives) and discussing how they convey the important ideas or themes in the text • Students evaluating authors' uses of specific language resources and discussing possible purposes for using these resources • Students intentionally adapting or adjusting their language in speaking or writing, based on their purpose, the task, the topic, their audience, and disciplinary expectations • Students reflecting on their own language awareness and how it supports their academic learning • Other:	

Leading
WITH
Learning
WestEd

Focus Area #4: Scaffolding and Student Ownership

Students develop autonomy and ownership of the learning process through scaffolding (planned and "just-in-time") and formative assessment practices that are tailored to their individual needs and that build their autonomy and ownership.

Indicators: We can see …	Note key details of interactions you saw & heard.
• Students using success criteria to guide and reflect on their own work and/or their peers' work • Students using norms and/or protocols for supporting one another in learning tasks • Students knowing when they are ready for help and requesting it • Students seeing when their peers need help and strategically posing questions or otherwise scaffolding their peers' learning • Students responding to teachers' just-in-time scaffolding in ways that further their learning • Other:	

Leading
WITH
Learning
WestEd

Summary Notes

Celebrations/Inspirations: Two or three to glow

Wonderings/Next step: One or two to grow