

Introducing the Delaware Teacher Classroom Observation Tool

The Delaware Teacher Classroom (DTC) Observation Tool is a tool for coaching and development. Administrators and teachers use this rubric to align expectations for what high-quality teaching and learning looks like. The observer uses the rubric to guide the collection of evidence from classroom observations to assess the quality of teaching -- both strengths and areas for growth.



Rubric Structure

The DTC Observation Tool is structured into three **Performance Areas** that describe the major elements of a successful classroom. Each Performance Area is accompanied by an Essential Question. They are:

1. **Learning Environment:** To what extent does the classroom environment support all students to learn?
2. **Engagement in Learning:** To what extent does the instruction support and engage all students?
3. **Maximizing Learning:** To what extent do all students retain and apply their learning with productive struggle?

Each **Essential Question** guides the observer to focus on three **Indicators** which describe the Performance Area at four levels of performance. Each Indicator is defined by several **Descriptors**. The Descriptors articulate the teacher and student behaviors that an observer would see in the classroom, during instruction, at each of four different performance levels. The observer collects evidence based on the Descriptors of those Indicators to identify feedback to support teacher growth and development and to support assessment of the instruction.

There are many things teachers do outside of the lesson that contribute to high-quality teaching and learning. To recognize this important work, each Performance Area includes **Core Teacher Skills**. Core Teacher Skills are *not* evaluated, but instead serve to name much of the work teachers do to achieve the levels of performance noted in the Indicators, and to provide a common language and set of expectations to support teacher growth and development.

Rubric Use

In the Delaware Teacher Classroom Evaluation System, the observer will use the rubric to observe each teacher several times over the course of the school year, and to collect evidence at each observation. The observer will share feedback after each observation to support teacher growth and will only assign performance ratings at the end of the school year, using the evidence collected over the course of the entire year.

Core Teacher Skills articulate the many factors that go into the action of planning so that high-quality teaching and learning can happen in the classroom. For example, the act of teacher planning and preparation is not specifically addressed in the Indicators but is observed in the quality of the classroom lesson and outcomes assessed in the rubric. This does not mean that planning is not important or expected; on the contrary, planning is critical to success in Delaware classrooms. What this rubric structure affirms is that what matters most for students is the actual instruction they experience in the classroom, and so instruction is what is ultimately assessed in the Delaware Classroom Teacher Evaluation System.

Performance Area #1: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: To what extent does the classroom environment support all students to learn?

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Indicator 1.1 Structures for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routines, procedures and behavior expectations are not clear, communicated, and/or not taught. ● Students struggle to or do not follow routines and procedures causing interruptions in instructional time and long periods of downtime. ● Student misbehavior detracts from others' learning and teacher does not or unsuccessfully responds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routines, procedures, and behavior expectations are clear and communicated but are not matched to students' needs and/or not taught to mastery. ● Students follow classroom routines and procedures with teacher prompting, causing interruptions in instructional time. ● Student misbehavior detracts from others' learning, but students change their behavior when prompted by the teacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routines, procedures and behavior expectations are clear, communicated, and matched to students' needs and taught to mastery. ● Students follow established classroom routines and procedures, which maximizes instructional time. ● Students exhibit appropriate behavior that does not detract from others' learning. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students take initiative to manage classroom procedures and their own behavior. ● Students prompt others to follow classroom procedures, routines and expectations.
Indicator 1.2 Positive Classroom Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher and/or student interactions are not respectful towards one another. ● Students do not listen attentively to the teacher and the teacher does not refocus their attention. ● When working cooperatively, students do not share work responsibility. ● Students do not persevere and/or are not motivated to complete quality work and the teacher does not encourage students' efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher to student interactions are respectful but student to student interactions are not respectful or are respectful with teacher prompting. ● Students listen attentively to the teacher but not to their peers and the teacher does not provide prompting to listen, or prompting is unsuccessful. ● When working cooperatively, students share work responsibility but do not offer support to one another. ● Students are prompted by the teacher to persevere and/or are praised for their efforts to complete quality work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher to student and student to student interactions are respectful with minimal to no teacher prompting. ● Students listen attentively to the teacher and their peers with no to minimal teacher prompting. ● When working cooperatively, students share work responsibility; offering and receiving support from one another. ● Students persevere and complete quality work; requiring minimal to no teacher prompting. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students independently use problem solving and conflict resolution skills during cooperative learning opportunities. ● Students encourage others to persevere.
Indicator 1.3 Equitable Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher does not demonstrate/model high expectations for learning and achievement for all students. ● Students are not provided equitable* opportunities to respond and participate. ● Students' interests are not known and/or used to build relationships and/or connect to their academic work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher demonstrates/models high expectations for learning and achievement for all students but does not provide supports or supports are not matched to students' needs to help meet those expectations. ● Students are provided equitable* opportunities to respond and participate but are not encouraged by the teacher to engage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher demonstrates/models high expectations for learning and achievement for all students and provides support matched to students' needs to help meet those expectations. ● Students are provided equitable* opportunities to respond and participate and are encouraged by the teacher to engage. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students are eager to participate without the need for teacher prompting. ● Students take initiative to share their interests and perspectives.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students do not have access to displays, visual aids, props, text and/or words that reflect their needs to support learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' interests and/or perspectives are known and are used to build relationships and connect to their academic work. Students have access to displays, visual aids, props, and/or words that reflect their needs to support learning but do not use the support or are not encouraged by the teacher use the supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are encouraged to share their interests and/or perspectives and accept that others' interests and perspectives are worthy. Students use or are encouraged to use displays, visual aids, props, text and/or words that reflect their needs to support learning. 	
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*Equitable is defined as what one needs based on their diverse needs related to background knowledge/experiences, language, ability, etc.

Performance Area #2: ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING: To what extent does the instruction support and engage all students?				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Indicator 2.1 Objectives for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson objective(s) are not aligned to grade-level standards and/or student IEP goals. The lesson objectives are not accessible to students. Students do not know what they are learning or what the objective is. Students are not provided criteria for success with the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson objective(s) are aligned to grade-level standards and/or student IEP goals but are not written in student-friendly terms stating what students should know and be able to do. The lesson objectives are accessible to students but are not clearly communicated. Students can read or describe the objective. Students are provided criteria for success, but the criteria are not aligned to the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson objective(s) are aligned to grade-level standard(s) and/or student IEP goals and are written in student-friendly language that state what students should know and be able to do. The lesson objectives are accessible to students, clearly communicated and revisited throughout the lesson. Students can clearly articulate what they are learning and why it is important for them to know. Students are provided criteria for success with the objective, that are fully aligned to the objective. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make connections between what they are currently learning to previous learning and/or to content in other disciplines.
Indicator 2.2 Presentation of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson structure is not coherently sequenced according to the major concepts required to master the objective. Learning experiences do not align to the objective or are mainly activities. Students' prior knowledge has not been assessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson structure is coherently sequenced according to the major concepts, but pacing does not provide adequate processing time. Learning experiences are logically aligned** to the objective but are primarily directed by the teacher. Students' prior knowledge may have been assessed but it is unclear as misconceptions have not been addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson structure is coherently sequenced and paced according to major concepts required to master the objective. Learning experiences are logically aligned** to the objective and are both teacher and student directed. Students' prior knowledge has been assessed and misconceptions have been anticipated. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can progress at different learning rates; students who finish early are engaged in meaningful learning opportunities. Students have choice in the materials and grouping arrangements.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences are not supported through well-chosen explanatory devices* • Learning experiences do not include a strategy to activate or summarize learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences are supported through explanatory devices* but they are not matched to the objective and/or learners. • Learning experiences include a strategy to activate and/or summarize learning, but they do not support the objective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences are supported through well-chosen explanatory devices* that are matched to both the objective and learners. • Learning experiences include a strategy to both activate and summarize the lesson and they support the objective. 	
Indicator 2.3 Checks for Understanding and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher does not assess students' progress towards the objective(s). • Students are not provided opportunities to demonstrate their learning. • Students do not receive feedback, or the feedback is not specific or timely. • Students are not required to self-assess learning. • Students are not provided opportunities to relearn, redo, or be reassessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher assesses students' progress towards the objective(s) but does not use the feedback to adjust instruction. • Students have one option to demonstrate their learning. • Students receive feedback that is timely and specific to them and the established criteria for success, but they do not use feedback to correct their work. • Students self-assess learning, but it is unrelated to the criteria for success. • Students are provided an opportunity to redo or be reassessed without the opportunity to relearn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher assesses all students' progress towards the objective(s) at critical moments in the lesson and uses the feedback to adjust instruction. • Students are provided multiple options to demonstrate their learning. • Students receive frequent, timely feedback that is specific to them and the established criteria for success and use the feedback to correct their work. • Students use the criteria for success to self-assess their progress towards mastery of the objective. • Students are provided opportunities to relearn, redo, or be reassessed. 	AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students provide academically-focused feedback to each other. • Students can independently self-assess and determine the steps needed to improve.

*Explanatory devices are defined as analogies, metaphors, gestures, demonstrations, modeling, think-aloud, physical models, visual representations, graphic organizers, interactive whiteboards, mental imagery, presentation software, minimal and progressive cueing, simulations, educational games, and role plays.

**Logically aligned means to consider the knowledge and activities necessary to accomplish the objective, a progression in level of difficulty (Bloom's Taxonomy), and the gradual release of responsibility to enable students to transfer, retain, and independently apply their learning.

Performance Area #3: MAXIMIZING LEARNING: To what extent do all students retain and apply their learning with productive struggle?

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Indicator 3.1</p> <p>Rigorous assignments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments are not aligned to the objective/standard. • Assignments are not relevant to the learner and/or do not require application of knowledge for real purposes. • Assignments are not differentiated to meet students' needs. • Students are not expected to apply content to generate examples, review material, solve problems, lead discussions, and/or critically analyze information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments are aligned to the objective/standard but are not matched to the students or content and therefore not cognitively challenging. • Assignments are relevant to the learner or require application of knowledge for real purposes. • Assignments are differentiated to meet groups of students' needs. • Students have opportunities to apply content to generate examples, solve problems, review material, lead discussions, and/or critically analyze information but many students do not engage in the opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments are aligned to the objective/standard and matched to the students and content and are therefore cognitively challenging. • Assignments are relevant and require application of knowledge for real purposes. • Assignments are differentiated to meet individual students' needs. • Students apply content by generating examples, reviewing material, leading discussions, critically analyzing information and/or solving problems to display greater mastery of the objective. 	<p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments provide students the opportunity to self-evaluate, reflect and share their problem-solving strategies and/or new ideas. • Students are able to self-select from options in assignments. • Students apply content by developing possible solutions, addressing local or global issues, and/or developing creative approaches.
<p>Indicator 3.2</p> <p>Questioning and Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are not aligned to the objective and/or are primarily of low level. • Teacher does not allow adequate wait time for student responses and/or answers questions for students. • Students do not or cannot support their answers through evidence and/or explanation. • Students do not ask or pose their own questions. • Students do not participate in class discussions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are aligned to the objective but are a mix between low and high level or are not appropriately matched to the learner(s). • Teacher provides prompts to help students answer questions but not does allow adequate wait time. • Students support their answers through evidence and/or explanation with teacher prompting. • Students ask the teacher and peers questions with teacher prompting. • Class discussions are primarily between the teacher and students and do not include all students or class discussions are primarily among students, but the discussion is low level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are aligned to the objective, are primarily of high level, and are appropriately matched to the learner(s). • Teacher provides prompts to help students answer questions and allows for adequate wait time. • Students support their answers through evidence and/or explanation with no or minimal teacher prompting. • Students ask the teacher and peers questions to expand on others' thinking with no or minimal teacher prompting. • Class discussions are robust; primarily with students talking more than the teacher does and including all students. 	<p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students engage in accountable talk* to challenge thinking, push for evidence, and/or refine arguments. • Students initiate class discussions and peer collaboration.

<p>Indicator 3.3</p> <p>Academic Language and Vocabulary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher does not use or incorrectly uses academic language and vocabulary. Students are not explicitly taught or required to know specific academic language or vocabulary. Students are not provided opportunities to use academic language or vocabulary. Students are not prompted to use academic language or vocabulary and/or corrected when misused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher models inaccurate or inappropriate use of academic language and vocabulary but recognizes and corrects their errors. Students are not explicitly taught but are required to know specific academic language and vocabulary. Students are provided opportunities to use academic language or vocabulary but not in a rigorous, authentic way. Students are prompted to use appropriate academic language and vocabulary and are corrected when it is misused. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher models accurate and appropriate use of academic language and vocabulary. Students are explicitly taught and required to know specific academic language and vocabulary. Students are provided opportunities to use academic language or vocabulary in a rigorous, authentic way. Students use appropriate academic language and vocabulary to explain and elaborate on their thinking with no or minimal teacher prompting. 	<p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students take responsibility to help others understand academic language and vocabulary.
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*Accountable talk requires students to further develop what others have said and demands students to use accurate knowledge that is relevant to the discussion and requires students to use appropriate evidence to defend such knowledge.

Core Teacher Skills for Learning Environment

- Bringing multiple perspectives to the discussion of content including attention to learners' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms
- Investing time in knowing individual students and informing relationships to best support their learning
- Issuing logical and appropriate consequences as needed such that consequences are successful in changing student behavior
- Providing specific, concrete, sequential and observable directions for behavior and academics
- Promoting student persistence in overcoming environmental and learning challenges
- Using efficient routines and procedures
- Using voice and presence to maintain authority and caring for students
- Developing clear procedures and processes for group work
- Reteaching appropriate behaviors
- Providing positive reinforcement
- Modeling and reinforcing positive self-talk
- Explicitly teaching strategies that help students link effort to achievement
- Uses space to maintain safety and accessibility
- Uses various strategies to maintain attention
- Uses calling patterns that invites all students to participate
- Procuring and using displays, visual aids, props, language cues that reflect students' cultures and backgrounds
- Using grouping roles and arrangements (group sizes, students with diverse needs and perspectives) that are matched to content and learners to maximize student understanding and learning efficiency with the objective
- Using random calling patterns to provide all students equal access to high-level questions

Core Teacher Skills for Engagement in Learning

- Considering students' cultures and language skills when developing learning objectives and activities
- Allocating instructional time to address the most important content for the grade or course
- Managing time to optimize learning time
- Checking whether students understand the key content needed to master the lesson at key points
- Developing objectives that are manageable, worthy and appropriate for a lesson
- Developing objectives that have learner as the subject, have an active performance verb, and a curricular knowledge or skill
- Developing the thinking skills thought processes that students will be required to use to engage with think about the content (e.g., how to "analyze", deduce, infer, synthesize, etc.)
- Considering students' strengths, interests, needs, and IEP goals (where applicable) to develop learning goals and prepare lessons
- Developing and/or using informal and formal assessments aligned to learning objectives that yield usable data on students' progress toward grade-level standards
- Developing and/or using a variety of appropriately demanding and differentiated instructional materials and activities, such as texts, questions, problems, learning experiences and assignments
- Using multiple ways to explain and share content (for example: model the skill, provide an exemplar, compare or contrast, etc.)
- Making connections between lesson objective/content and content and learning from other lessons or prior knowledge
- Varying teacher role in the instructional process (e.g. instructor, facilitator, coach) based on content, instructional purpose, and needs of students
- Modeling a process for students to provide feedback themselves and to each other
- Providing opportunities for students to respond to and build on their peers' ideas
- Providing a rationale for learning by explaining the benefits of learning a concept, skill, or process and how it applies to the students' lives at home, work or school
- Differentiating instructional experiences and assessments
- Clearly communicates accurate knowledge of the content
- Adjusts instruction as a result of the feedback received from students
- Planning and implementing multiple opportunities for students to practice the skills they are expected to master in the lesson
- Structuring and delivering lesson activities so that students do an appropriate amount of thinking required by the lesson

Core Teacher Skills for Maximizing Learning

- Posing questions or providing lesson activities that require students to support their thinking through citing evidence and/or explaining their thinking
- Explicitly teaches students criteria for constructing arguments and/or supporting opinions
- Planning for questions at different levels of cognitive challenge
- Considering students' needs to match the level of questions to ask or level of prompting to provide
- Explicitly teaches skills that students are required to use as part of an assignment
- Providing opportunities for students to learn, practice, and master academic language
- Asking questions to stimulate discussion that serves different purposes (e.g. probing for learning and understanding, helping learners articulate their ideas and thinking processes, stimulating curiosity, and helping guide students to question)
- Using knowledge of content to design assignments that support students to extend their learning
- Using knowledge of content and students to match students to relevant and appropriate assignments
- Allow think time for responses
- Designing assignments that include multiple ways for students to demonstrate their learning (examples: writing, reading, speaking and student discourse)

Delaware Smart Card for Classroom Observations

Performance Area #1 Learning Environment: <i>To what extent does the classroom environment support all students to learn?</i>	Performance Area #2 Engagement in Learning: <i>To what extent does the instruction support and engage all students?</i>	Performance Area # 3 Maximizing Learning: <i>To what extent do all students retain and apply their learning?</i>
<p>1.1 Structures for Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Routines and procedures</i> • <i>Behavior expectations</i> • <i>Instructional time</i> • <i>Student behavior</i> <p>1.2 Positive Classroom Climate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interactions</i> • <i>Student attention</i> • <i>Ownership and responsibility</i> • <i>Student perseverance</i> <p>1.3 Equitable Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Expectations for learning and achievement</i> • <i>Participation</i> • <i>Consideration of interests/perspectives</i> • <i>Classroom supports</i> 	<p>2.1 Objectives for Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aligned and student-friendly</i> • <i>Accessible, communicated and revisited</i> • <i>Understood by students</i> • <i>Criteria for success</i> <p>2.2 Presentation of Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sequencing and pacing</i> • <i>Learning experiences</i> • <i>Misconceptions anticipated</i> • <i>Use of explanatory devices</i> • <i>Activating and summarizing learning</i> <p>2.3 Checks for Understanding and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monitoring progress and adjusting instruction</i> • <i>Options for demonstrating understanding</i> • <i>Teacher feedback to students</i> • <i>Student self-assessment</i> • <i>Opportunity to redo, relearn, and reassess</i> 	<p>3.1 Rigorous Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alignment to objective, content, and learner</i> • <i>Relevant and meaningful</i> • <i>Differentiated and supported</i> • <i>Application of content</i> <p>3.2 Questioning and Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Alignment to objective, content, and learner</i> • <i>Wait time and prompting with questions</i> • <i>Students support answers</i> • <i>Students generate questions</i> • <i>Class discussions</i> <p>3.3 Academic Language and Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher models</i> • <i>Explicitly taught</i> • <i>Students use to explain and elaborate thinking</i>