



# Teacher Observation Tool

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**Observation Resources**

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**Learning Lab**

# Table of Contents

<i>Using these resources</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
<i>Teacher Observation Tool</i> .....	<b>3</b>
<i>Using the Teacher Observation Tool Rating Guide</i> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>Examples of observable actions</i> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Learning Dimension</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Essentials Dimension</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Agency Dimension</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Relationship Dimension</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Scenarios</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Rating Guide .....	12
Suggestion .....	12
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension items</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Scenario A: Elementary school physical education class (in person) .....	13
Scenario B: Middle school theater class (remote).....	14
<b>Learning Dimension items</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Scenario A: High school science class (in person, hybrid) .....	16
Scenario B: Middle school ELA class (in person, hybrid).....	17
<b>Essentials Dimension items</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Scenario A: High school science class (in person).....	19
Scenario B: Kindergarten circle time (in person) .....	20
<b>Agency Dimension items</b> .....	<b>22</b>
Scenario A: Middle school music class (in person) .....	22
Scenario B: High school world history class (in person) .....	23
<b>Relationship Dimension items</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Scenario A: Elementary school math class (in person) .....	25
Scenario B: High school English class (in person) .....	26
<b>Frequently Asked Questions for observers</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions for teachers</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>Glossary of terms</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>32</b>

# Using these resources

## **Teacher Observation Tool**

The purpose of the Cognia Teacher Observation Tool is to help you promote teachers' improvement toward the practice of learner centric instruction and effective teaching using this formative observation tool. Use this downloadable version of the tool's content to complete observations offline before adding them to the eProve app.

## **Using the Teacher Observation Tool Rating Guide**

This resource provides observers with how-to guidance when using the Teacher Observation Tool Rubric to rate each item on the Cognia Teacher Observation Tool. Use this rating guide and your professional knowledge and judgement when determining each items' rating during an observation.

## **Examples of Observable Actions**

In this section, you will find examples of observable actions you may see in a classroom for each of the dimensions and items within the Teacher Observation Tool. Use this to familiarize yourself with what each dimension should look like and gain insights about what you should be looking for in a 20-minute observation.

## **Scenarios**

These sample stories of classroom interactions outline how an observer may rate items in the Teacher Observation Tool. Here you can read the example, determine your own rating, and check this against the sample ratings and rationales.

## **Frequently Asked Questions for Observers**

This section helps observers by answering the most common questions about using the Teacher Observation Tool. Here you will also find a few samples of best practices to include when you start your observations.

## **Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers**

These questions and answers prepare teachers so that they understand what to expect during an observation. This resource is meant to be shared with your insitution.

## **Glossary of Terms**

This list of terms operationalizes words used within the Teacher Observation Tool. Use this tool to clarify definition of terms within the Teacher Observation Tool.



# Teacher Observation Tool

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Time In \_\_\_\_\_ Time Out \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Beg. \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson End \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Observed \_\_\_\_\_ Observer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners	4	3	2	1
2. Treats each learner equitably	4	3	2	1
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers	4	3	2	1
4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
<b>Learning Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills	4	3	2	1
3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests	4	3	2	1
4. Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills	4	3	2	1
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs	4	3	2	1
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs	4	3	2	1



<b>Dimensions and Observable Expectations</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Not Evident</b>
<b>Essentials Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence	4	3	2	1
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners' behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being	4	3	2	1
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners' needs	4	3	2	1
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners	4	3	2	1
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner	4	3	2	1
<b>Agency Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress	4	3	2	1
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy	4	3	2	1
<b>Relationship Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners	4	3	2	1
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity	4	3	2	1
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs	4	3	2	1



# Using the Teacher Observation Tool Rating Guide

This following information provides observers with *how-to guidance* when using the Teacher Observation Tool Rubric to rate each item on the Cognia Teacher Observation Tool. The rubric consists of three factors by which each item on the observation tool is scored using a four-point Likert Scale. The three factors are *Implementation of Practices*, *Authenticity of Practices*, and *Effect on Learners*. The four-point Likert Scale is *Very Evident* (4), *Evident* (3), *Somewhat Evident* (2), and *Not Evident* (1).

Factors to consider when using this tool	Very Evident (4)	Evident (3)	Somewhat Evident (2)	Not Evident (1)
<b>Implementation of Practices</b>	Practices are fully implemented.	Practices are mostly implemented.	Practices are minimally implemented.	Implementation of practices is not evident.
<b>Authenticity of Practices</b>	Practices are fully embedded into the classroom environment.	Practices are mostly embedded into the classroom environment.	Practices are implemented but not embedded into the classroom environment.	Authenticity of practices is not evident.
<b>Effect on Learners</b>	Practices consistently affect all learners.	Practices consistently affect most learners.	Practices consistently affect some learners.	Effect on learners is not evident.

## Rubric Factors and Descriptors

Each item on the observation tool is to be assessed against each factor on the rubric and the degree each item is *Evident* during the 20-minute observation. The following is a high-level overview of each factor and possible descriptors that observers may consider when determining each factor's rating. The descriptors are examples that help observers understand a particular factor on the rubric and are not an exhaustive list of descriptors. Observers should use the professional knowledge gained from the training on this tool and their professional judgment to determine the final item rating.

- *Implementation of Practices* refers to the extent to which a teacher implements each observable action with quality, fidelity, and rigor.
  - The teacher adjusts actions or practices to meet learners' needs.
  - The teacher demonstrates a deep understanding of best practices.
  - The teacher demonstrates the ability and wisdom to change actions or practices based on learners' cues.
- *Authenticity of Practices* refers to the extent to which a teacher embeds each observable action in the classroom environment.
  - The practices appear familiar to the learners.
  - The practices appear to occur regularly rather than sporadically.
  - The practices are regular, effective, and meet the needs of learners.
- *Effect on Learners* refers to the extent to which a teacher's practice(s) influence the learners in the classroom.
  - The learners respond positively.
  - The learners make adjustments.
  - The learners participate/engage in learning.



# Examples of observable actions

## Culture/Climate Dimension

Why these items matter:

Teachers and learners hold values and beliefs regarding social interactions and relationships within the classroom. The culture/climate of learning can have important implications for student outcomes. When a teacher creates and sustains a learning environment in which each learner is cared for, is safe, has a sense of belonging, and feels secure to share their thoughts, then learners can achieve their potential.

Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows connectedness to learners, interpersonal bonding</li> <li>Expresses concern for learners' well-being</li> <li>Demonstrates personal interest in learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"_____, we missed you in class yesterday"</li> <li>"Are you comfortable doing this task with your classmates?"</li> <li>"How did your game go last night?"</li> </ul>
2. Treats each learner equitably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates openness and approachability</li> <li>Makes culturally responsive eye contact with learners</li> <li>Uses words that resonate with or do not exclude learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I am here to help you and answer any questions you may have"</li> <li>"What you said is very interesting because ..."</li> <li>"What needs to happen so that everyone can ... ?"</li> </ul>
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accepts and supports learners to take risks voicing their opinions and asking questions</li> <li>Promotes interactions that are highly supportive, friendly, and learner-centered</li> <li>Asks questions that encourage learners to voice their opinions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Be ready to talk in your small groups about ... and remember that everyone's voice is important."</li> <li>Show me thumbs up if you agree with ..."</li> <li>"What do you think about ...?" "Who has a similar opinion or different one?"</li> </ul>
4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates a positive attitude toward the content/activity/task</li> <li>Shows genuine interest in the content/activity/task</li> <li>Exhibits energy that appeals to learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"What you said makes me think/reminds me of ..."</li> <li>Demonstrative hand, arm, body movement for explaining and emphasizing ideas</li> <li>"I'm so excited to begin this lesson with you."</li> </ul>

# Learning Dimension

Why these items matter:

Teachers create and deliver processes to ensure learners have the opportunities to gain and demonstrate an understanding of the content so they can apply that knowledge and acquisition of skills. “Teachers must not only be clear about what they want students to learn; they also must know typical student steps and missteps toward this goal” (Moss & Brookhart, 2009).

Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures learners' attention to set the stage for learning</li> <li>• Thoroughly explains why the content or activity is important to the learners</li> <li>• Uses simple and direct language to provide instructions about the activity/task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What are you expected to be able to do for this activity?”</li> <li>• “Why do we follow these steps?”</li> <li>• “Who can repeat back to me what steps we are going to complete?”</li> </ul>
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages learners to question each other through discussions and debate</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for learners use application skills to complete activities/tasks</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for learners to express themselves individually and collectively in a variety of ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Explain your thinking about ...”</li> <li>• “Tell me more.”</li> <li>• “What is your opinion about ... and what valid information supports it?”</li> </ul>
3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes the purpose of the lesson—why this is important to every learner’s life</li> <li>• Makes it personal to the learners (e.g., through culture, gender, age, geography)</li> <li>• Incorporates a real-world aspect into the lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Knowing how to ... is important because ...”</li> <li>• “Where could you see/use this information?”</li> <li>• “How does this relate to other ideas/topics?”</li> </ul>
4. Monitors learners’ understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps close proximity to learners</li> <li>• Formatively assesses learners throughout the lesson</li> <li>• Encourages learner self-assessment</li> <li>• Elicits learner questioning to determine level of understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher uses non-verbal cues to check for understanding (e.g., reassuring head nod, thumbs up, smile, use of emojis).</li> <li>• “Show me how you have solved this ...?”</li> <li>• “I see that you can ..., can you explain what you know about ... ?”</li> </ul>
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes instructional arrangement (e.g., peer partner, groups, individual) for activities/tasks</li> <li>• Uses different ways to engage with use of materials (e.g., graphic organizers, visuals, text)</li> <li>• Changes instructional tasks (e.g., reduces number of items, modifies assignment, gives learner options)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What is another way you can find the answer?”</li> <li>• “You may choose how you want to do the assignment, as long as you complete ...”</li> <li>• “Can I show you a different way?”</li> </ul>





Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses many forms of feedback</li> <li>• Provides learners with individualized feedback</li> <li>• Gives feedback that is specific to the current lesson/activity</li> <li>• Learners are involved in the feedback process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I notice that you can .... Can you show/tell me more?”</li> <li>• “I am impressed with how far you have come with ...”</li> <li>• It sounds/looks like this is a place that is difficult, would you like to talk to me about it?”</li> </ul>



# Essentials Dimension

Why these items matter:

Teachers affect learner behavior, achievement, and confidence in their ability to learn and work with others. An effective teacher demonstrates core competencies such as presence and disposition, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and management of the learning environment.

Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has deep understanding of their subject matter</li> <li>• Speaks clearly and with appropriate tone, tempo, and volume</li> <li>• Demonstrates new skill/concept (acquisition), applies thinking skills (application), integrates individual thinking skills (assimilation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Let me demonstrate the first few movements, then you give it a try.”</li> <li>• “When I ..., I can now...”</li> <li>• Teacher uses think-alouds. “I see ... but where should I go now?”</li> </ul>
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners’ behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses active listening skills to understand and respond to learners</li> <li>• Conveys confidence in learners</li> <li>• Provides high levels of support through varied teaching and modes of presentation</li> <li>• Provides feedback to learners on personal goals and time frames</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “What I hear you saying is ...”</li> <li>• “You make a good suggestion about ...”</li> <li>• “How can you break this down so that you can get this done?”</li> </ul>
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners’ needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chooses resources and materials with intentionality that enhance learning activities aligned to learning objectives and instruction</li> <li>• Secures a variety of resources from within and outside of the classroom that increase learner learning and engagement</li> <li>• Makes resources easily accessible and available to engage learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How do you make sure that you have all the correct materials?”</li> <li>• “What would be the best place to find information about ...?”</li> <li>• “I see that two groups need to get out their devices for their project work.”</li> </ul>
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employs active learning strategies</li> <li>• Uses a variety of assessment strategies</li> <li>• Applies group instructional strategies to be inclusive of all learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You will work in groups to ...”</li> <li>• “Find your partner and choose the topic to investigate.”</li> <li>• “Each person in a group has a specific job for the activity and together, you make the decision.”</li> </ul>
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures smooth transitions between activities/tasks</li> <li>• Executes efficient procedures; maintains control of classroom environment; ensures learners stay on task</li> <li>• Ensures group projects are organized</li> <li>• Dedicates/protects blocks of time to instruction with minimal interruptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “You have five minutes remaining to...”</li> <li>• “First, we are going to .... Then, we will .... Finally, we will ...”</li> <li>• Teacher uses pre-determined grouping (example-count off, alphabetize, seat assignments).</li> </ul>



# Agency Dimension

Why these items matter:

Teachers foster learners' ability to self-direct and self-regulate their learning by using strategies such as: setting and communicating learning targets, providing aligned activities, sharing appropriate feedback, and assessing progress toward targets. The process of building learner agency has a proven impact on learner achievement. When teachers convey high expectations, learners "learn to believe in themselves and in their futures, developing the critical resilience traits of self-esteem, self-efficacy, autonomy, and optimism" (Benard, 1995, p.3).

Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures learners are working the problems, not the teacher</li> <li>• Facilitates inquiry-based activities/tasks</li> <li>• Guides learners to take charge of their learning and engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I know if you keep working and thinking, you'll find a solution."</li> <li>• "Where can you find additional resources?"</li> <li>• "Remember to review your learning goals and project timeline."</li> </ul>
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows learners to contribute to the design of lessons, projects, and/or activities</li> <li>• Gives learners the ability to attend to activities with the role of decision-making</li> <li>• Helps learners make sense of instructional concepts and create their own understandings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Decide what you will be working on for ..."</li> <li>• "What do you want to learn about?"</li> <li>• "You can turn in by ... or you can choose to turn in by ...."</li> </ul>
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides opportunities for reflection or goal setting</li> <li>• Facilitates a progress-tracking process so learners know their areas of strengths or challenges</li> <li>• Identifies problems and generates solutions with the learner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "What went well during ...?"</li> <li>• "How is ... affecting your understanding?"</li> <li>• "Share and talk about your work with a partner."</li> </ul>
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows sufficient time for problem-solving</li> <li>• Provides encouragement when learners struggle</li> <li>• Gives learners guidance to be successful or to keep going</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher uses wait time.</li> <li>• "Let's try it this way instead" or "Let's try it another way."</li> <li>• "Your learning goals are not stretching you enough. Let's think together about how to go stretch your thinking."</li> </ul>
5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies strengths-based learning: active mentoring to learners, learner-led decision-making beyond academics</li> <li>• Acknowledges learners' personal potential</li> <li>• Uses and encourages positive self-talk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "How can we make this better?"</li> <li>• "Who can you count on to help with ...?"</li> <li>• "Does this represent your best work?"</li> </ul>



# Relationship Dimension

Why these items matter:

Teacher and learner relationships have demonstrable effects on learner achievement. Actions that foster healthy, positive connections between the teacher and learners are foundational to learners' social-emotional well-being.

Item	Descriptive Actions	Examples of Actions
1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes harmony and positivity toward learners</li> <li>• Shows empathy through dialogue with learners</li> <li>• Redirects learners if negative interactions occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I can see why you think ..."</li> <li>• "What do you all think/feel about ...?"</li> <li>• "Stay calm and talk through your disagreement."</li> </ul>
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposes questions when engaged with groups</li> <li>• Upholds the role of facilitator rather than interferes with engaged groups</li> <li>• Suggests and promotes peer assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Has everyone had a turn to use the ...?"</li> <li>• "Look for ways to help each other to ..."</li> <li>• "Share your ideas with your group."</li> </ul>
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses discretion to address learners</li> <li>• Demonstrates maturity and consideration for others</li> <li>• Speaks respectfully to learners at all times, including when redirecting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Can you tell me about ...?"</li> <li>• Teacher addresses issues and/or correction with a learner quietly and privately.</li> <li>• Teacher speaks in an even tone and volume with and toward all learners.</li> </ul>

# Scenarios

## Rating Guide

Factors to consider when using this tool	Very Evident (4)	Evident (3)	Somewhat Evident (2)	Not Evident (1)
<b>Implementation of Practices</b>	Practices are fully implemented.	Practices are mostly implemented.	Practices are minimally implemented.	Implementation of practices is not evident.
<b>Authenticity of Practices</b>	Practices are fully embedded into the classroom environment.	Practices are mostly embedded into the classroom environment.	Practices are implemented but not embedded into the classroom environment.	Authenticity of practices is not evident.
<b>Effect on Learners</b>	Practices consistently affect all learners.	Practices consistently affect most learners.	Practices consistently affect some learners.	Effect on learners is not evident.

## Suggestion

The following scenarios are provided as examples of what the items in one dimension might look like in a specific context. You might find it useful to refer to the Rating Guide after the scenario is read, rate the specific dimension items, and then compare your ratings to the ratings provided in this document. Please note that the ratings are not absolutes but are appropriate for the purpose of this exercise. A rating could be different in a real-time observation or when you are considering all items within the tool to rate.

# Culture/Climate Dimension items

The teacher:

1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners
2. Treats each learner equitably
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers
4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand

## Scenario A: Elementary school physical education class (in person)

Course Title: Throwing Accuracy

Subject: Physical Education

Grade Level: 1st Grade

Lesson Segment: Beginning

Start Time: 9:00 a.m.

End Time: 9:20 a.m.

### What's happening

The teacher is standing in front of the learners, who are sitting within the circle in the middle of the court. The teacher is explaining and demonstrating how to throw a basketball into the hoop and pointing out how to aim, throw, and follow through. The teacher also models in slow motion how to move one's body so that the basketball goes into the hoop. The teacher then directs the learners to pair up and select the item that they want to use to practice throwing, allowing them to choose from a variety of items with varying weights, textures, and sizes. The teacher stands next to the items, observing which one each pair selects. Once all the learners spread out across the gym to practice, the teacher walks around to each pair of learners to watch a throw and help point out what the learner could improve and what they are doing well. The teacher cheers them on through both their successes and areas of growth. After visiting each group, the teacher gathers everyone back together to their original seats in the circle. The teacher asks the learners to share their experiences of what worked well and what did not. First, the teacher has the learners share with a partner near them, then asks for learners to raise hands to be called on to share with the entire group.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher gives learners' choices and includes all learners in practicing accurate throwing skills. The teacher walks around to every pair of learners and gives help and praise as they practice.				
2. Treats each learner equitably	4	3	2	1
Rationale: While the teacher observes what items the learners choose for practice, the teacher does not make adjustments or item suggestions based on each learner's needs and skill level. No other tasks are given to the learners that already received feedback.				
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher asks for learners to share with a peer and share with the entire group at the beginning of class and not throughout the observation time.				



4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher cheers learners on as they practice and provides opportunities for learners to share their experiences.				

## Scenario B: Middle school theater class (remote)

Course Title: Pantomime  
 Subject: Theater  
 Grade Level: 7th Grade  
 Lesson Segment: Middle  
 Start Time: 1:15 p.m.  
 End Time: 1:35 p.m.

### What's Happening

The teacher has just finished introducing a new unit on pantomime while sharing a presentation on their screen. The teacher has all learners muted with their cameras on and asks for a thumbs up if they can hear. The current presentation slide has bullet points describing the activity that learners will participate in. The teacher takes a couple of minutes to send an action word or phrase in the chat to each learner to pantomime. The teacher gives the learners a minute of think time to come up with how to act out their word/phrase. The teacher selects one learner to first act out their action. The teacher directs the other learners to type in the chat their guesses of what action word or phrase the other learner is miming until someone guesses correctly. At that point, the teacher reminds the learners to use emojis to encourage and show support for their peers. The teacher then chooses another learner to begin acting out their word and reviews the chat for the learner who has the correct answer. The teacher watches the learner act out the phrase before reading the chat for correct guesses. The teacher reads only the correct guess, then calls on another learner to mime. The activity continues until everyone acts out their word or phrase. Next, the teacher shares a short video about pantomime: its definition, history, and examples of famous mimes through the ages. A few learners talk during the video, so the teacher redirects them to use the chat for their comments in order to eliminate distractions during the video. After the video is finished, the teacher reads a list of the learners' chat comments to the entire class.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Fosters an environment that embraces all learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher reminds learners to show their support for each other, which means that this practice is not fully embedded into the classroom's culture.				
2. Treats each learner equitably	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher treats all learners the same with no evidence of differentiation for learners that may have specialized needs within the class or remote setting.				
3. Encourages learners to share their opinions without fear of negative comments from their peers	4	3	2	1
Rationale: While the teacher allows the learners to share their comments in the chat, there is little evidence that they are encouraged to share opinions and no evidence that negative comments are addressed.				

4. Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
<p>Rationale: While the activity may have been fun for some learners, there is no evidence that the teacher creates enthusiasm among the learners. Using a video and keeping learners on mute causes them to be more passive and less likely to be engaged and enthusiastic for the subject. Also, the teacher calls on the learner to demonstrate the pantomime as opposed to asking for volunteers.</p>				



# Learning Dimension items

The teacher:

1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills
3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests
4. Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs

## Scenario A: High school science class (in person, hybrid)

Course Title: Blood Cells

Subject: Biology

Grade Level: 9th Grade

Lesson Segment: Beginning

Start Time: 11:10 a.m.

End Time: 11:30 a.m.

### What's happening

The teacher stands at the front of the room to begin a whole-class review of blood cells. Blood cell models are sitting on the counter and diagrams are hung on the front wall. The teacher asks learners for any questions at the end of a five-minute review. One hand is raised, and the teacher responds to the learner's question directly, referring again to the diagrams on the walls. The teacher next directs learners to the digital data table and organizer provided for all learners in the class to use during the upcoming activity. Next, the teacher uses a microscope at the front of the room to model how learners will prepare the microscope and examine cells. The teacher speaks directly to the remote learners to let them know they will receive pictures of blood cells to use for their examination with their digital microscope. The teacher also models on a tablet how to gather evidence and document data using the given data table and organizer. After the demonstration, learners are prompted to ask questions directly or use the chat to submit questions. The teacher answers questions verbally, occasionally referring to the diagrams at the front of the room. Next, the teacher tells learners to join their assigned pairings for the lab activity. The teacher moves around the room for support or to answer further questions.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Learning Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher models how to use the microscope and the resources to analyze the blood cells. Learners can hear and see the teacher's explanations. The teacher only asks for questions at the end of explanations and does not provide opportunities for clarity in real time.				
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher developed an activity in which learners practice their use of microscopes, examine, and record data. The teacher does not ask questions that require learners to analyze and synthesize the data.				



3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher has learners actively investigating blood cells in a lab activity. There is no connection built between the content and the learners' lives, such as why analyzing blood cells is important for some careers or just everyday knowledge.				
4. Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher only answers questions that are directly asked rather than prompt new ones. The teacher begins to circulate between groups during the lab, but it is not clear if the teacher will monitor through a variety of methods to check and confirm learners' understanding of the content.				
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher does not provide extra resources for students with learning differences to complete the lab activity. All learners receive the same lesson, activity, and resources.				
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher answers learners' questions but does not initiate questions that are specific to the learners' needs. Feedback focused on improving learners' understanding is not evident.				

## Scenario B: Middle school ELA class (in person, hybrid)

Course Title: Developing an argument with research

Subject: English

Grade Level: 6th Grade

Lesson Segment: Middle

Start Time: 8:25 a.m.

End Time: 8:45 a.m.

### What's happening

The teacher is transitioning the class from a whole-group discussion on a "Why A School Dress Code is Important" article to an independent writing activity. The teacher moves around the front of the classroom and reviews the instructions and describes resources on the class website for all learners to reference while they are completing the activity. All learners have the same primary article from which to write their argument. The teacher explains to learners that they also are to research and use three additional online sources to support and strengthen their argument and opinion of the article. The teacher reminds the learners about a previous discussion when they learned about accurate sources. The teacher refers to another resource on the website titled "Can I Trust This Site?" The teacher encourages learners to use creative expression in how they write their argument. The format for learners to publish their writing is from a list of choices (paper, graphic organizer, word web, presentation, or comic strip) that the teacher wrote on the board. The teacher tells learners in the classroom that they will receive the paper rubric for the assignment to use and reference as they work on the writing activity. The teacher tells remote learners that they will receive their copy of the rubric in an email shortly.



## Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Learning Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher uses a variety of resources to support the explanation of the assignment. Although some learners might benefit from having the rubric from the beginning of the explanation, the teacher provides an explanation about the rubric.				
2. Implements lessons and/or activities that stimulate learners to use higher order thinking skills	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher provides learner choice in online sources and form of expression during the activity. The teacher has learners use critical thinking for discerning sources of information and creativity in their writing.				
3. Delivers lessons that are relatable to the learners or aligned to their interests	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The activity allows learners to use a variety of media to draw real-world connections for their argument. The article's topic is one in which most students will find relatable even though they did not choose the article.				
4. Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher spends the time explaining the activity. The teacher does not ask learners about any confusing directions or questions for clarity.				
5. Adapts instruction and/or activities that meet individual learner's needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher provides some existing resources to aid learners in the application of the activity at the learner's discretion. The teacher provides some choice on how learners will express their ideas but does not adjust the instruction to meet specific learner's needs.				
6. Provides learners with purposeful feedback about their progress and/or needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher provides directions and a rubric but does not ask learners what they need to be successful and does not check on their progress or level of engagement.				

# Essentials Dimension items

The teacher:

1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners' behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners' needs
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner

## Scenario A: High school science class (in person)

Course Title: Periodic Table of Elements

Subject: Chemistry

Grade Level: 10th Grade

Lesson Segment: Beginning

Start Time: 12:50 p.m.

End Time: 1:10 p.m.

### What's happening

The teacher sits on a stool at the front of the room leading the class in a song about the periodic table of elements projected on the screen. The teacher demonstrates and encourages the learners to use hand motions to help them remember the information and occasionally points to the screen. The song is used as a transition for learners to get to their lab tables from the whole class seating arrangement. All learners have a worksheet and pencil with them while moving. The teacher is watching the movement around the classroom, waiting for all learners to travel to their lab tables. Each lab table already has materials out. After everyone appears to be seated, the teacher has the learners complete their sentences as they go through the "safe lab" checklist posted on the side of the room. Learners are excited to answer in chorus and clearly know the rules for experiments. The teacher switches the screen to display the brief directions for the lab, titled Flame Color Reactions, and reminds the learners of the instructions they went over in class the day before. The teacher then instructs groups to begin their task. The teacher walks around to each group and asks more than one group, "Have you made sure that you have all the correct materials?" to verify that the lab is being started correctly. At each group, the teacher reminds the learners that they can validate their findings by using the textbooks stacked at the end of each lab table, the computers in the back of the class, or other classmates.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Essentials Dimension</b>				
<b>The teacher:</b>				
1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher is singing along and leading learners confidently in the periodic table song using proper element names rather than abbreviations. The teacher uses the projected periodic table to reinforce the element names. All materials for the activity are prepared and ready for the learners.				
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners'	4	3	2	1



behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being				
Rationale: Learners appear confident in following classroom expectations as they transition, bringing only the necessary materials with them. The teacher checks that each group of learners knows the starting point for the experiment; however, no specific feedback is heard given to individual learners.				
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners' needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher reminds learners of additional resources available to them and sets up the materials in advance for the activity.				
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher enthusiastically prompts learners in practicing naming elements with hand motions, responding to questions chorally, and working in groups on the lab work. However, learners appear to be compliantly engaged—following the directions or expectations.				
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher uses songs to transition to new work to keep learners engaged while moving to a new task. The teacher has materials set up in groups before the learners arrive. The teacher has clearly reviewed the instructions for the lab in a prior class period but checks on each lab group to ensure that they are at the correct starting point for the lab.				

## Scenario B: Kindergarten circle time (in person)

Course Title: Circle Time  
Grade Level: Kindergarten  
Lesson Segment: End  
Start Time: 8:45 a.m.  
End Time: 9:05 a.m.

### What's happening

The teacher sits in a chair surrounded by the learners on the rug in front of the teacher. Next to them is a bulletin board with a large manipulative calendar and weather description. All the corresponding information for the day (month, day of the week, and forecast) is already visible on the two resources. The teacher calls on different learners to come up to the bulletin board to point to the day of the week, month, etc., as the teacher first says each word out loud. A few learners are talking to each other and not about the activity. On two separate occasions, the teacher stops the lesson to tell the learners to stop and stay with the group. Next, the teacher instructs the learners to stand up to sing “head, shoulders, knees, and toes” for their morning movement exercise. The teacher repeats this direction three times until all learners are following the directions. The teacher encourages the learners to perform all the motions along with everyone throughout the song but does not redirect the few learners who are not following the movement sequences. The teacher asks the learners to sit back down. The teacher repeats this direction two times until all learners are seated again. The teacher pulls out a book and begins to read to the learners.

## Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Essentials Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Delivers and/or facilitates the lesson with knowledge and confidence	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher displays all the corresponding information for the day on the bulletin board. The teacher uses proper names and terms while reviewing the day's information but does not give the learners the opportunity to use the language themselves.				
2. Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners' behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher redirects learners directly when they are causing a distraction but disrupts the lesson when doing so.				
3. Facilitates use of resources that support learners' needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: While the bulletin board is used, there are no other materials seen being used by the teacher. The teacher already prepared the bulletin board for learners to refer and point to rather than allow learners to manipulate the board themselves.				
4. Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher only calls learners to the front to point to information that has already been shared. The teacher does not include learners in book choice and does not introduce the book to create enthusiasm. Learning appears more passive than active.				
5. Manages the learning time in an efficient and optimal manner	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher follows what appears to be a typical daily routine, keeping most learners' attention. It is necessary that the teacher repeats instructions multiple times to ensure all learners are following the direction.				

# Agency Dimension items

The teacher:

1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks
5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy

## Scenario A: Middle school music class (in person)

Course Title: Emotion in music

Subject: Music

Grade Level: 8th Grade

Lesson Segment: Middle

Start Time: 10:10 a.m.

End Time: 10:30 a.m.

### What's happening

Four groups of learners are working in different areas of the classroom on an activity that began during a previous class session. The teacher sits with a group of five learners and listens intently as one learner says that they are having a difficult time agreeing on a sound pattern for their collaborative project. The teacher nods, subtly points to a poster that says, "Teamwork Rules," and says to the group, "Let me hear the group talk about this." Several learners begin to talk to each other, saying that it is their job to listen and problem-solve together. After a few minutes, the teacher asks the group, "What is your next step to getting this done as a group?" and "Are there any other resources or tools in the classroom that can help you make a decision?" The group hesitates to answer the questions, so the teacher prompts them by saying, "Please share your thoughts." The teacher then reminds the learners to review their notes from a previous lesson on musical patterns. The teacher expresses that it is up to the learners to choose the emotion and how they would like to express it in their new musical work. The teacher tells the group, "You can do this!" before walking away and toward another group of learners.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Agency Dimension</b>				
<b>The teacher:</b>				
1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher encourages learners to take charge at the table and resolve their differences. The teacher guides learners with questions so that the learners can facilitate their own discussion.				
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks	4	3	2	1



Rationale: Although not directly observed during this lesson that all groups were given a choice, it is clear that the teacher has given this group the choice on which emotion to express and how to do so. Learners are given the ability to make decisions related to the learning activity.				
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher assists the group to problem-solve their challenge. The teacher asked supporting questions to help them think about resources available and previous class sessions. The teacher could provide more individualized support for other group members and travel to one of the other groups more regularly.				
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher encourages the group to resolve their ongoing struggle and reassures learners that they had the capacity to complete the assignment.				
5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher helps learners to apply their skills and knowledge to persevere through the assignment.				

## Scenario B: High school world history class (in person)

Course Title: Maya and Aztec cultures

Subject: Social Studies

Grade Level: 10th Grade

Lesson Segment: Middle

Start Time: 2:15 p.m.

End Time: 2:35 p.m.

### What's happening

The teacher concludes a review lesson on the details of the Maya and Aztec cultures. The teacher circulates the room as the class discusses the teacher's notes on the screen. Learners are finishing filling out a guided notes comparison chart between the two civilizations. The teacher then informs the learners that they will each individually debate with a classmate about which ancient civilization they would have wanted to be a part of and why it is was a better option than the other. Using only their guided notes, the teacher gives the learners seven minutes of preparation time to build their argument and a one-minute summary to present to the class. The teacher sets a countdown timer on the board that can be seen by all learners. The teacher circulates the room and makes note of how many learners choose each civilization. The teacher is busy making notes and only answers a few questions that are asked by learners in passing. After the seven-minute timer goes off, the teacher randomly calls on two learners arguing for opposite civilizations. The teacher gives one learner in each debate pair one minute to state their position while the other listens. Next, the teacher allows one learner from the other debate pair to state their position in one minute. Then, the first pair has one minute to refute anything the other learner stated in their summary. After the debate, the teacher asks the other learners in the class/audience to anonymously write down which learner they think won the debate and why. The teacher then calls on other pairs of learners to share their positions.



## Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Agency Dimension</b>				
<b>The teacher:</b>				
1. Empowers learners to be responsible for the learning at hand	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher only allows learners to use the guided notes from class to develop their argument. The learners are not given flexibility as to how to present their position.				
2. Gives learners choices about the learning activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
Rationale: While the teacher gives the choice of which of the two civilizations the learners would argue, the learners have limited resources to develop their reasons. Each of the learners' arguments are built upon the same set of information.				
3. Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress	4	3	2	1
Rationale: While each debate is evaluated by the learners in the audience, there is no evidence that the teacher will use the peer learner feedback to assist the debating learners in their reflection or goal setting.				
4. Encourages learners to persevere with or seek challenging activities or tasks	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher does not provide guidance to learners while circulating the classroom, as the teacher is busy recording which civilization learners selected.				
5. Builds learners' growth mindset and self-efficacy	4	3	2	1
Rationale: There is no evidence that the teacher encouraged learners, as the teacher was busy during work time.				

# Relationship Dimension items

The teacher:

1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs

## Scenario A: Elementary school math class (in person)

Course Title: Fractions

Subject: Math

Grade Level: 3rd Grade

Lesson Segment: End

Start Time: 1:35 p.m.

End Time: 1:55 p.m.

### What's happening

The teacher is at the front of the room at the interactive board and reminds learners that they have been exploring fractions. The teacher then introduces new information on fractions by leading the learners through a discussion on the parts of a whole. The teacher asks learners to move into different pairs than who they worked with the previous day to complete the activity. The teacher sees that three pairs did not change, so the teacher reminds the class to find different partners and says, "It is important to learn from each other, not always the same friend." Now the teacher moves around the classroom listening to pairs' conversations and giving learners specific feedback. The teacher says to one pair, "You are not trying hard enough like the other groups, and time is running out" and remarks to another pair, "You always make me proud." All learners look up from their work when the teacher makes these remarks to the two pairs.

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Relationship Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The learners are aware of how to work with a partner, but three groups have to be redirected. There is no evidence that learners disrespect each other. The practice seems familiar and routine.				
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher scans the classroom to be certain that each learner has a different partner. The teacher redirects three pairs and reminds them why it is important to mix up.				
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher praises one group and criticizes another where the words are overheard by the entire class.				



## Scenario B: High school English class (in person)

Course Title: Poetry  
 Subject: English  
 Grade Level: 11th Grade  
 Lesson Segment: Middle  
 Start Time: 10:10 a.m.  
 End Time: 10:30 a.m.

### What's Happening

Learners are taking turns reading different stanzas of a poem on a paper on their desks. Once a learner finishes their stanza, they call on another learner of their choice. After the final stanza is read, the teacher directs learners to a specific stanza. The teacher asks a question and immediately calls on a learner who raises their hand. While the learner is speaking, a few learners in the back of the room softly giggle and point at the learner speaking. The teacher moves closer to these learners and continues to listen to the one learner who is responding to the question. The teacher then asks if any other learners agree or disagree with what was said. Now more hands are raised, and the teacher tells the learners to get into groups of three to discuss and then reach consensus. The teacher says quietly to the learners who giggled, "Your behavior toward one of our class members was not appropriate. You know that everyone's voice in this class is important."

### Ratings

Dimensions and Observable Expectations	Very Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident
<b>Relationship Dimension</b>				
The teacher:				
1. Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher immediately uses proximity control to indicate to the learners that their behavior is being watched. The teacher continues to give the learner who is speaking full attention.				
2. Cultivates learner cooperation, collaboration, and inclusivity	4	3	2	1
Rationale: When the teacher asks if anyone agrees or disagrees and more hands are raised, the teacher takes the opportunity to have learners collaborate and reach consensus as a team. The teacher also reminds the disruptive learners the importance of being respectful toward everyone.				
3. Preserves learners' dignity while attending to their individual needs	4	3	2	1
Rationale: The teacher uses proximity control as a subtle approach to stop the disruptive behavior but gives the other learner full attention and respect. Later, when the learners move into their groups, the teacher quietly speaks to the learners about respecting their classmates.				

# Frequently Asked Questions for observers

## **What length of time should I observe a teacher?**

Since this is a formative tool, the minimum observation period is 20 minutes, but the time can be increased depending on the teacher's needs.

## **Am I observing the teacher, the students, or both?**

Cognia recommends conducting observations singularly, meaning that the observer should focus on completing one observation at a time instead of using multiple tools during one dedicated timeframe. However, extending the observation period to conduct a second observation that focuses on the students is acceptable.

## **What are a few recommendations I should keep in mind when using this tool?**

To use this tool with fidelity, it is essential to defer to the rating guide when assigning a score to any item. The rating guide, combined with your professional judgment, is the best way to ensure you provide the teacher with information on how to improve. Also, be sure to keep in mind that although you are observing the teacher, all the dynamics and interactions occurring during the observation should be considered when you assign a rating for any item.

## **Are there items in the Teacher Observation Tool that I should be looking at together?**

Yes, there are items within the Teacher Observation Tool in which the characteristics and contexts of the observed behaviors and actions are related and interdependent. However, this does not mean that one item's score predetermines a related item's score. Here are a few examples of observable actions that have connections and can be considered together when scoring:

### **Culture/Climate Dimension and Relationship Dimension**

"Fosters an environment that embraces all learners" relates to "Promotes respectful and caring interactions toward and between learners."

### **Essentials Dimension and Culture/Climate Dimension**

"Implements instructional strategies that actively engage learners" relates to "Creates enthusiasm for the learning at hand."

### **Learning Dimension and Agency Dimension**

"Monitors learners' understanding of the content and/or the acquisition of skills" relates to "Provides assistance for learners to navigate and monitor their learning progress."

### **Learning Dimension and Essentials Dimension**

"Communicates clear explanations about the activities or tasks" relates to "Communicates and upholds high expectations for learners' behaviors to maximize their learning and well-being."

As always, use the rating guide and your professional judgment when observing and scoring individual items on the observation tool.

## **Can I use the Teacher Observation Tool in a virtual or remote setting?**

The tool is applicable to remote settings if the setting is live or conducted synchronously.



### **What do I do with the observation results?**

The results from the observation provide you with information to use during a post-observation conversation with the teacher. Engaging in dialogue about specific items (high ratings and low ratings) and discussing new strategies for improvement will strengthen the teacher's ability and confidence to continue to grow as a professional.



# Frequently Asked Questions for teachers

## What is the Cognia Teacher Observation Tool?

The Cognia Teacher Observation Tool is a formative observation instrument that is used to gather information about teachers' demonstration of specific research-based instructional practices and competencies across five dimensions. The Teacher Observation Tool can be used in remote, hybrid, synchronous virtual, and in-person classroom settings and in any course or grade level.

## What is being observed?

The Teacher Observation Tool focuses on five dimensions of effective teaching competencies. Each dimension contains between three and six items that are completely appropriate to observe in a minimum of a 20-minute classroom segment. Each item is rated using a four-point scale ranging from Very Evident to Not Evident. The five dimensions and descriptors are:

- *Culture/Climate*: A learning environment that is created and sustained in which each learner is cared for, is safe, has a sense of belonging, and feels secure to share their thoughts
- *Learning*: Processes established to ensure learners have opportunities to demonstrate an understanding of the content and apply that knowledge and acquisition of skills
- *Essentials*: Core competencies demonstrated by an effective teacher, such as presence and disposition, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and management of the learning environment
- *Agency*: Actions that foster learners' ability to self-direct and self-regulate their learning
- *Relationship*: Actions that foster healthy, positive connections between the teacher and learners

## How are the items scored?

The Teacher Observation Tool Rating Guide provides observers with a rubric to use when scoring the individual items. Three factors are the essential drivers of the rubric, and the rubric is based on a four-point scale, ranging from Very Evident to Not Evident. No one factor, item, or dimension is weighed more heavily than another. Each item on the observation tool is assessed against each factor on the rubric and the extent to which each item is Evident during the observation. The factors are:

- *Implementation of Practices* refers to the extent to which a teacher implements each observable action with quality, fidelity, and rigor.
- *Authenticity of Practices* refers to the extent to which a teacher embeds each observable action in the classroom environment.
- *Effect on Learners* refers to the extent to which a teacher's practice(s) influence the learners in the classroom.

## Do I need to do anything to prepare for the observation?

You do not need to prepare for the observation unless your observer has asked you in advance to share your lesson plan or any other type of information relative to your classroom.

## Will I get to see my feedback/how do I see my feedback?

When the observation is complete, your observer can email a copy of the observation in a PDF format directly from the app. The copy you receive will include the final rating for each item, the overall average rating for each dimension, and an overall average score. Your completed observation could include comments if the observer made notes on the final observation. You will not receive any ratings that compare your item averages to teachers in your institution. This is a formative tool, and the results are intended to inform you of your strengths and areas to improve. Since the Teacher



Observation Tool is a formative tool, you and your peers, along with your administrators, should use the results to stimulate reflective dialogue for the purpose of improving instruction.

**How is the Teacher Observation Tool different from Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool™ (eleot™)?**

The Teacher Observation Tool and eleot differ in that one provides information on the individual teacher's demonstration of specific actions and the other generates information about how a classroom of students are engaging in and reacting to the learning environment. When the two tools are used in concert, they provide educators with a comprehensive perspective of teaching and learning in the classroom setting.



# Glossary of terms

The following is a list of terms that have been operationalized for use with the Teacher Observation Tool.

Terms	Definition in the context of the Teacher Observation Tool
<b>Culture/Climate Dimension</b>	A learning environment that is created and sustained in which each learner is cared for, is safe, has a sense of belonging, and feels secure to share their thoughts
Environment	Context in which learning occurs within a classroom setting or learning situation
Equitably	Access to resources and support based on individual need
Diverse thinkers	Learners that express varying ideas and insights that could be based on their backgrounds and experiences, with an environment that should foster tolerance, respect, and understanding
<b>Learning Dimension</b>	Processes established to ensure learners have opportunities to demonstrate an understanding of the content and apply that knowledge and acquisition of skills
Higher order thinking skills	Also referred to as critical thinking skills, this type of thinking is based on a concept of education reform (e.g., Bloom's Taxonomy) that pushes learners to go beyond memorization of facts to the comprehension of information
<b>Essentials Dimension</b>	Core competencies demonstrated by an effective teacher, such as presence and disposition, pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and management of the learning environment
Resources	Assets and capacity to fulfill the needs of and support for the learning environment and each learner; generally considered as material, digital, and human resources
Actively engage learners	Learning that allows students to generate knowledge or make meaning via such behaviors as clarifying, asking questions, comparing, and applying new information
<b>Agency Dimension</b>	Actions that foster learners' ability to self-direct and self-regulate their learning
Empowers	Allowing and encouraging learners to have a voice in making decisions about their learning progress, as well as types of activities and topics that interest them
Growth mindset	Instilling in learners the belief that they can achieve, thrive, and overcome challenges
Self-efficacy	A learner's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to overcome challenges, "stay the course," and realize success
<b>Relationship Dimension</b>	Actions that foster healthy, positive connections between the teacher and learners
Collaboration	The action of learners who might or might not have the same interests, abilities, or backgrounds to focus on a common goal and work together to accomplish the goal (a goal can mean an activity or task)
Inclusivity	Intentionally not excluding any learner from activities, tasks, discussions, etc., due to background, ability level, and/or physical impairment
Learners' dignity	One's belief in the worthiness of their voice, relationships, and actions in a classroom environment
<b>Other Terms</b>	Definition in the context of the Teacher Observation Tool
All, fully	Including more than 75 percent of (e.g., learners)
Most, mostly	Approximately 51 to 74 percent of (e.g., learners)
Some, minimally	About 25 to 50 percent of (e.g., learners)
Not evident	Less than 25 percent of (e.g., learners)
In-Person	Instructional interactions that occur "in person" and in real time between teachers and learners
Hybrid	Synchronous learning that teaches both in-person and online learners simultaneously
Remote	Learning where the student and the educator are not physically present in a traditional classroom environment



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