THE DANIELSON GROUP

THE FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING
INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

FFT FOCUS SERIES

CONTENTS

01

Arranging for Learning

Begin by deeply understanding your students' identities and assets, and the content and pedagogy of your discipline. Once well informed in both of these areas, create instructional outcomes and learning experiences that effectively sequence opportunities to learn and gain mastery of complex concepts and enduring understandings **(Components 1a, 1b and 1e).**

02

Building Responsive Learning Environments

Be purposeful about creating a learning environment in which students are affirmed, challenged, and encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Explicitly teach, model and support positive behaviors conducive to learning and establish systems that support those behaviors. Effectively communicate clear goals and expectations that allow students to engage with content and check for their own understanding. **(Components 2b, 2d, and 3a).**

03

Engaging Students in Collaboration, Dialogue, & Critical Thinking

With these systems, structures and understandings in place, use questioning and discussion to support and develop critical thinking, reasoning and reflection; create learning experiences requiring higher order thinking, collaboration, and multiple approaches **(Components 1e, 3b, and 3c, 3e).**

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The Observation Tool can be used in conjunction with the Self-Assessment and Reflection protocol for a variety of purposes, including:

- As an opportunity for an observer to work with individual teachers to reflect on their practice by focusing on one, or all eight, of these critical components.
- By grade level and/or department teams, or an entire staff to gauge how teachers are doing and where support might be needed.
- As a way to gauge teacher growth and progress from a beginning point to an end-point (and along the way), whether it's the beginning/end of year, or as a readiness indicator at the launch of an inquiry cycle.

However this tool is used, the intent should always be to promote reflection, improvement, and support.

Elements of Success

For each element of success, record evidence (teacher and student words and actions) that you see during the observation. Based on the evidence, check the level that best describes the teacher's current practice. If there's no evidence, you can leave the box blank. Note that teachers will check these boxes as well.

What's the teacher's current level of practice?

- **Not Yet:** You do not see this in action in the teacher's classroom (teacher might check this because they haven't had a chance to address it, haven't thought about it, or needs help to improve).
- **In Process:** The teacher can do more - with help or on their own - but they've begun the work.
- **Established**: The teacher could help others improve.

Component Continuum

After you've observed the teacher, review your evidence and describe where you place the teacher's practice on the continuum described in the arrow.

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Applying Knowledge of Content & Pedagogy (1a)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Disciplinary Expertise *Teachers have deep knowledge of the disciplines they teach, including structures, central concepts and skills, prerequisite relationships, and methods of inquiry.* ❑ **Not yet** ❑ **In process** ❑ **Established**	
Pedagogical Content Knowledge *Teachers make content accessible to students by understanding and addressing preconceptions, presenting ideas in comprehensible and powerful ways, and thoughtfully implementing the most effective pedagogical approaches.* ❑ **Not yet** ❑ **In process** ❑ **Established**	
Knowledge of Interdisciplinary Relationships and Skills *Teachers make interdisciplinary connections to scaffold learning, support engagement, and build essential knowledge and skills that cross disciplines and support student learning in multiple contexts.* ❑ **Not yet** ❑ **In process** ❑ **Established**	

How does understanding of content and pedagogy support intellectual engagement and deeper learning for students?

✔ Teachers have a command of the content and curriculum they teach and account for possible misconceptions to ensure student understanding.

✔ Teachers utilize a wide range of instructional strategies that are well-suited to the content being learned and provide explanations and feedback that further learning.

✔ Teachers make connections between concepts within and across disciplines, prioritizing knowledge and skills that are transferable and support student success.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of applying knowledge of content & pedagogy? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

Knowing and Valuing Students (1b)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Respect for Students' Intersecting Identities *Students' lived experiences and funds of knowledge are the foundation for the development of identity, purpose, intellect, and character.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Understanding Students' Current Knowledge and Skills *Learning experiences reflect what students bring and are designed with their current knowledge and skills in mind.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Knowledge of Whole Child Development *Students' cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development are all addressed in the design of learning environments and experiences to promote student success and autonomy.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Knowledge of the Learning Process and Learning Differences *Learning requires active intellectual engagement and appropriate support aligned to students' individual differences and needs.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	

How are each student's individual context, identity, assets, and brilliance valued and viewed as the foundation for their academic and personal success?

✔ Teachers know and value their students' identities, as well as their academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs.

✔ Teachers build on students' assets to support the development of identity, intellect, and character.

✔ Teachers apply their knowledge of students to advocate boldly on their behalf and foster student assumption of responsibility for learning and personal development.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of knowing and valuing students? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

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Planning Coherent Instruction (1e)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Tasks and Activities *Tasks and activities are specifically matched to learning outcomes, encourage higher-level thinking and student agency, and create authentic opportunities to engage with meaningful content.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Flexible Learning *Multiple strategies and approaches are tailored to individual student needs to create the appropriate level of challenge and support for each student.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Student Collaboration *Student groups are an essential component of learning and development, and are organized thoughtfully to maximize opportunities and build on students' strengths.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Structure and Flow *Lesson and unit plans are well structured and flow from one to the next to support student learning and development.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	

How are learning experiences structured to provide flexible, student-centered opportunities to learn important content and develop positive habits and mindsets?

✔ Learning opportunities are coherent in structure and suitable for the students in the class.

✔ Learning opportunities are specifically tailored to meet the needs of individual students in the class.

✔ Learning opportunities prioritize the needs of individual students and support student assumption of responsibility for learning.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of planning coherent instruction? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

OBSERVATION DEBRIEF PREPARATION

Components 1a, 1b, and 1e

1. Compare and contrast your observation evidence with the teacher's self-reflection. Where are you aligned? Where is there a discrepancy?

2. Based on your observation evidence, which component/element might you suggest the teacher prioritize next in their professional learning?

3. If your priority is different from the teacher's choice, how will you ensure the teacher feels heard and supported in developing in this area?

4. Script three questions or statements that will help to guide you through the conversation with the teacher; we recommend focusing on 1) teacher strengths, 2) priority areas, and 3) possible next steps.

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Fostering a Culture for Learning (2b)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Purpose and Motivation *Teachers and students share an overarching dedication to both content mastery and personal growth.* ❐ Not yet ❐ In process ❐ Established	
Dispositions for Learning *Teachers model, encourage, explicitly teach, and reinforce curiosity, critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection to support student success and their social, emotional, and academic growth.* ❐ Not yet ❐ In process ❐ Established	
Student Agency and Pride in Work *Students make informed choices, devote energy to learning, take pride in their accomplishments, and actively suggest ways to make the classroom more joyful, rigorous, and purposeful.* ❐ Not yet ❐ In process ❐ Established	
Support and Perseverance *Teachers and students encourage one another to persevere and use strategies to support each other through challenging work.* ❐ Not yet ❐ In process ❐ Established	

In what ways do teachers model and encourage the types of actions and attitudes that contribute to a joyful, rigorous, and purposeful classroom that supports personal and academic growth?

✓ The culture of the class is conducive to student learning and development.

✓ The culture of the class is characterized by high expectations and the supports needed for the successful learning and development of all students.

✓ Students play an active role in establishing a culture that consistently fosters dialogue, joyful inquiry, reflection, and growth, allowing all students to flourish.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of fostering a culture for learning? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

Supporting Positive Student Behavior (2d)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Expectations to Support the Common Good *Students play an active role in establishing and maintaining expectations with regular opportunities for critical reflection both individually and as a group.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Modeling and Teaching Habits of Character *Teachers model, explicitly teach, and reinforce habits that promote learning, ethical behavior, and citizenship.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Self-Monitoring, Reflection, and Collective Responsibility *Students successfully monitor their own behavior, attend to their impact on other students, and appropriately support one another.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	

In what ways do teachers model and encourage the types of actions and attitudes that contribute to a joyful, rigorous, and purposeful classroom that supports personal and academic growth?

✓ Positive behavior is modeled by the teacher and taught explicitly.

✓ Members of the classroom community display positive behavior as a result of teacher modeling and suggested recalibration, rather than compliance.

✓ Members of the classroom community consistently and independently display positive behavior and practical wisdom and seek opportunities to build a better classroom, school, and world.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of supporting positive student behavior? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

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Communicating About Purpose and Content (3a)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Purpose for Learning and Criteria for Success *Teachers communicate the goals and objectives of learning activities and outline an instructional pathway for students to meet the established criteria for success.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Specific Expectations *Student actions during each step of learning activities are clearly and effectively communicated with specific expectations articulated and reinforced throughout.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Explanations of Content *Content knowledge is scaffolded and presented in multiple, engaging ways with frequent, integrated checks for student understanding.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	
Use of Academic Language *Verbal and written content-related language used by teachers and students is academically rigorous, accurate, and subject and grade appropriate.* ☐ Not yet ☐ In process ☐ Established	

How do teachers communicate goals and objectives, expectations for learning activities, and content knowledge to students?

✓ The teacher's communication with students is clear and accurate and supports student learning.

✓ The teacher's communication with students is clear and accurate; it supports their active engagement in a learning experience and models effective use of language.

✓ The teacher's communication is rich and nuanced, inviting students to think critically and contribute intellectually; it encourages curiosity and supports student autonomy.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of communicating about purpose and content? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

OBSERVATION DEBRIEF PREPARATION

Components 2b, 2d, and 3a

1. Compare and contrast your observation evidence with the teacher's self-reflection. Where are you aligned? Where is there a discrepancy?

2. Based on your observation evidence, which component/element might you suggest the teacher prioritize next in their professional learning?

3. If your priority is different from the teacher's choice, how will you ensure the teacher feels heard and supported in developing in this area?

4. Script three questions or statements that will help to guide you through the conversation with the teacher; we recommend focusing on 1) teacher strengths, 2) priority areas, and 3) possible next steps.

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Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques (3b)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Critical Thinking and Deeper Learning *Questions and discussions require critical thinking, have multiple answers, and are used to deepen student understanding.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Reasoning and Reflection *Questions and discussions challenge students to reason, reflect on learning, justify their thinking, and generate ideas for future inquiry.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Student Participation *Students demonstrate curiosity and engage one another through questions and dialogue, challenging each other's thinking with respect and humility.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	

How do students reflect, reason, and explain their thinking by asking and answering questions and engaging in dialogue with others?

✓ Questioning and discussion, framed and led by teachers, are used effectively to support student learning and development.

✓ Questioning and discussion, framed or led by teachers and students, support critical thinking, reasoning, and reflection.

✓ Students intentionally use questioning and discussion to develop their own and others' thinking, reasoning skills, and habits of reflection.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of using questioning and discussion techniques? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

Engaging Students in Learning (3c)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Rich Learning Experiences *Students demonstrate agency and critical thinking in completion of tasks and activities that require high levels of intellectual engagement.* ❑ Not yet ❑ In process ❑ Established	
Collaboration and Teamwork *Student collaboration is a key component of learning and engagement, and students take initiative to collaborate in new or unplanned ways that further their learning and make it more engaging and meaningful.* ❑ Not yet ❑ In process ❑ Established	
Use of Instructional Materials and Resources *Instructional materials and resources are used effectively to support intellectual engagement and deep learning of the content.* ❑ Not yet ❑ In process ❑ Established	
Opportunities for Thinking and Reflection *Individual lessons, activities, and tasks, as well as instructional pathways, have multiple and effective opportunities to think, reflect, and consolidate understanding.* ❑ Not yet ❑ In process ❑ Established	

Do learning experiences give each student the opportunity to do the learning and engage in ways that are challenging, authentic, and relevant?

✔ Learning experiences engage students intellectually, requiring them to think and collaborate.

✔ Learning experiences support curiosity, encourage critical thinking, and include multiple ways for students to engage and represent their ideas.

✔ Students take initiative to increase the challenge, complexity, relevance, and rigor of learning experiences.

What evidence did you observe to help you gauge where this teacher sits on the continuum of engaging students in learning?

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Responding Flexibly to Student Needs (3e)

Elements of Success	Notes and Observations *Possible examples, evidence statements, and questions*
Evidence-Based Adjustments *When appropriate, teachers use their expertise to alter or replace pre-planned activities based on students' understanding, questions, and interests.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Receptiveness and Responsiveness *Teachers are open to and capitalize upon unexpected student actions, questions, and internal and external events; they encourage and support students to pursue new learning and opportunities on their own.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	
Determination and Persistence *Teachers are committed to efficacy, even when students encounter difficulty in learning, and pursue alternative approaches when necessary to help students be successful.* ☐ **Not yet** ☐ **In process** ☐ **Established**	

How do teachers respond to student understanding, interest levels, and life events as they work toward lesson and unit goals and objectives?

✓ The teacher adjusts lessons and is responsive to student needs.

✓ The teacher's adjustments and responsiveness lead to deeper understanding for students and/or new learning experiences.

✓ Students voice their needs, ask questions or make suggestions that spark new learning opportunities, and make effective adjustments and modifications based on their self-monitoring and reflection.

Where do you place the teacher's practice on this continuum of responding flexibly to student needs? What relevant evidence supports your decision?

OBSERVATION DEBRIEF PREPARATION
Components 3b, 3c, and 3e

1. Compare and contrast your observation evidence with the teacher's self-reflection. Where are you aligned? Where is there a discrepancy?

2. Based on your observation evidence, which component/element might you suggest the teacher prioritize next in their professional learning?

3. If your priority is different from the teacher's choice, how will you ensure the teacher feels heard and supported in developing in this area?

4. Script three questions or statements that will help to guide you through the conversation with the teacher; we recommend focusing on 1) teacher strengths, 2) priority areas, and 3) possible next steps.