PLANNING FOR THE PREOBSERVATION CONFERENCE

POINTS TO PONDER

• Will I ask the teacher to respond to a set of written questions prior to the conference? If so, will I ask the teacher to submit these prior to our meeting so that I can use them to plan for the preobservation conference? Or will I ask him to bring his comments with him to the meeting?

• What level of detail will I require from the teacher when we meet regarding what the lesson will entail? (Perhaps I will spend more time on this topic with novice teachers so that I can get a firm grasp on how they approach lesson planning and check for student understanding of the lesson objective.)

• Will I ask the teacher to bring a copy of the lesson plans to the meeting?

• Will I ask the teacher to submit a copy of the lesson plans prior to the meeting so that I will have time to review them in advance in order to provide feedback when we meet?

• Will I ask the teacher to provide copies of worksheets in advance?

• Will I ask the teacher to bring a copy of the assessment that he plans to use to measure student outcomes for this particular skill/lesson objective?

• How will I choose which data collection tool to use during the lesson? Will I give the teacher a choice? Will I select the tool based on previous conversations the teacher and I have had or from reviewing my notes of recent walkthroughs in this classroom?

• Should I provide some examples of completed data collection tools and review them with teacher in order to ensure that he has a grasp on the use for this particular form?

• Where will the meeting be held? Should I hold it in the teacher’s classroom so that she can pull materials/resources when asked to share how she planned this lesson?

• In order to better manage my time, what system do I have in place for scheduling pre and postobservation conferences?

• Is there anyone else who should join us during the preobservation conference?
LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES/INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

- Briefly describe the content of the lesson and the major activities in which the students will be involved.
- What do you want students to know and to be able to do by the end of this lesson?
- Is this lesson an extension lesson from a previous day’s lesson, or is it new material?
- What is the objective for the lesson?
- List the instructional objectives for this lesson.
- Explain how today’s instructional objectives fit into the curriculum competencies.
- What do you want your students to take away from your lesson today?
- Why did you choose this objective/these objectives?
- How do you plan to communicate the learning objective(s) to the students?
- How are you segmenting the learning?
- How is/are the lesson objective(s) aligned with state curriculum standards?
- What data did you use to design this lesson? How did the data influence the planning of this lesson?
- What kind of background knowledge do the students need to have for this lesson?
- What sources of student data did you use to determine student performance levels?
- How do you become familiar with students’ background knowledge, skill levels, and experiences?
- What difficulties or misunderstandings might students have? How have you planned for those?
- What are the connections to previous and future learning?
- What are some of the ways that you will make the learning relevant to students?
- Please walk me through the steps you took to plan for this lesson.
- How do you plan for special needs in your classroom?
ASSESSMENT

• How will you assess student learning during and after this lesson?
• How will you determine if your lesson objective(s) was/were achieved?
• How do you plan to provide feedback to the students?
• How will the students be assessed by both the teacher and by the students themselves?
• Where have you built in time for student reflection and self-assessment in your lesson?
• What are some of the questions you plan to ask students during the lesson?
• How do you expect students to respond to questions – whole class? Individual?
• How do you ensure that you engage/call on a large percentage of students?
• Are there opportunities in the lesson for students to generate questions that would encourage them to think?
• How will you measure the students’ progress toward achieving the stated learner objective?
• What measures will you have in place to seek feedback from all of your students to ascertain whether they have understood and are able to demonstrate understanding of the lesson objective(s)?
• How will you use the results of the assessment?
• How will you assess your students throughout the lesson and at closure to ensure that the lesson objectives have been met?
• What specific products or demonstrations will assess student learning/achievement of goals for instruction?
• How will you ensure that students understand how they are doing and support students’ self-assessment?
• How will you check for understanding during the lesson?
• How will you use assessment data to inform your next steps?
• Describe how you go about identifying students in need of intervention for a given skill? How do you monitor student progress in your classroom on an ongoing basis?
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

- What teaching strategies will you use to teach this lesson? What resources will be utilized?
- How will you model or explain clear expectations for the students’ learning?
- How will each activity promote rigorous thinking?
- How will students be grouped for learning? How is the grouping related to the intended concepts?
- How will differentiated assistance be provided to individual students, struggling students as well as those needing an extra challenge?
- How will you know when to move from one activity to the next?
- Are there parts of the lesson where you have planned to invoke curiosity, exploration, and discovery?
- Are you using visual aides to help enhance student understanding?
- Why did you choose these strategies and resources?
- What form of lesson delivery should I expect to see?
- What materials, technology and/or supports will you use during the lesson to achieve the objective?
- What difficulties with the lesson do you anticipate that students might have?
- Walk me through how you plan to open the lesson as well as provide lesson closure.
- How will you engage the students in learning? What will you do? What will the students do? Will the students work in groups, or individually, or as a large group? Provide any worksheets and/or list other materials the students will be using.
- Briefly describe the varied learning needs of students in this class, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners, and how you plan and prepare to meet their needs. How did you plan instruction so it will address the learning needs of all students in the class? Provide two specific examples of what specific students with disabilities or English Language Learners will do and how they will do it.
CONNECTING LEARNING

- What is the academic relationship between this lesson with past or future lessons? (Why this lesson? Why now?)
- How are you planning to connect what the students will learn to what they have previously learned?
- How will you determine the students' retention and ongoing application of learning from this lesson?

OTHER

- Please explain any special situations or circumstances of which the observer might need to be aware.
- Identify any unique or special characteristics of your class, which you would like me to be aware of in advance.
- Describe anything that you want the observer to know about this class that you believe is important background information (i.e. individual students, the class as a whole, recent class events, curriculum issues, special needs, etc.).
- List any particular teaching strategies on which you wish to have feedback.
- Are there specific areas you would like the observer to look for/focus on?
- List any particular things or individual students on which you want specific feedback during this observation.
- As you are teaching, what do you want me to look for as far as professional growth is concerned? For example, giving instructions, management of instructional time, management of student behavior, instructional presentation, instructional monitoring, instructional feedback, facilitating instruction, communicating within the learning setting, etc.
- As you are aware, professional development has been provided this year for select data collection tools. Which tool would you prefer that I use during the observation?
- Where would you like me to sit?
- Will you be providing a copy of your lesson plans in advance? If not, where can I expect to find them upon entering your classroom?
- Is there anything else you would like to discuss before the observation?
- Please list any other information you feel pertinent.
- Discuss ways you reflect and analyze your teaching.
- What are some proactive ways you further your own professional growth?
- What is your communication style with students? With families? With colleagues?
- Please attach the following items for review prior to your scheduled observation: