

Standards for Rigorous Classroom Instruction

Date: _____ Teacher: _____ Class/Time Observed: _____ Observer: _____

Score	Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)
5	Almost all students are engaged in HOTS almost all the time.
4	Students are engaged in at least one major activity during the lesson in which they perform HOT operations. This activity occupies a substantial portion of the lesson and many students are demonstrating HOTS.
3	Students are primarily engaged in routine lower order thinking (LOT) operations. There is at least one significant question or activity in which some students demonstrate some HOTS.
2	Students are primarily engaged in LOTS, but at some point they perform HOT as a minor departure from the lesson.
1	Students are engaged in only LOTS; i.e., they either receive, recite, or participate in routine practice. No activities during the lesson require students to go beyond acquisition and/or comprehension of knowledge.
Score	Deep Understanding
5	Understanding is very deep because the teacher successfully structures the lesson so that almost all students do at least one of the following: sustain focus on a significant topic; demonstrate their understanding of the problematic nature of information and/or ideas; demonstrate complex understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a complex problem. In general, students' reasoning, explanations and arguments demonstrate fullness and complexity of understanding.
4	Understanding is relatively deep because either the teacher or the students provide information, arguments or reasoning that demonstrates the complexity of an important idea. The teacher structures the lesson so that many students do at least one of the following: sustain focus on a significant topic for a period of time; demonstrate their understanding of the problematic nature of information and/or ideas; demonstrate understanding by arriving at a reasoned, supported conclusion; or explain how they solved a relatively complex problem.
3	Knowledge is treated unevenly during instruction; i.e., deep understanding of a concept is countered by superficial understanding of other ideas. At least one important idea may be presented in depth and its significance grasped, but in general the focus is not sustained.
2	Understanding remains superficial and fragmented. While some key concepts and ideas are mentioned or covered, only superficial knowledge or incomplete understanding of these complex ideas is evident.
1	Knowledge is very thin because it does not deal with significant topics or ideas. Teacher and students are involved in the coverage of simple information and the primary goal seems to be acquisition and retention, not understanding.

Score	Substantive Conversation
5	All features of substantive conversation (HOT topic, shared non-scripted ideas, and coherent promotion of understanding) are evident, and there is at least one example of <u>sustained</u> conversation (i.e., at least 3 consecutive exchanges). Almost all students participate.
4	All features of substantive conversation are evident, and there is at least one example of <u>sustained</u> conversation. Many students participate.
3	Feature 2 (sharing) and/or Feature 3 (coherent promotion of collective understanding) occur(s). There is at least one example of <u>sustained</u> conversation.
2	Feature 2 (sharing) and/or Feature 3 (coherent promotion of collective understanding) occur(s) briefly and involve(s) at least one example of two consecutive exchanges.
1	Virtually no features of substantive conversation are evident during the lesson.
Score	Value Beyond School
5	Students study or work on a topic, problem or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual public problems. Students recognize the connection between classroom learning and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the academic content. This meaning is strong enough to lead students to become involved in an effort to influence a larger audience beyond their classroom in one of the following ways: communicating knowledge to others (including within the school), advocating solutions to social problems, providing assistance to people, creating performances or products with utilitarian or aesthetic value.
4	Students study or work on a topic, problem or issue that the teacher and students see as connected to their personal experiences or actual public problems. Students recognize the connection between classroom learning and situations outside the classroom. They explore these connections in ways that create personal meaning and significance for the academic content. However, there is no effort to use the knowledge in ways that go beyond the classroom to influence a larger audience.
3	Students study a topic, problem or issue that the teacher succeeds in connecting to students' actual experiences or to public problems. Students recognize some connection between classroom learning and situations outside the classroom, but they do not explore the implications of these connections; consequently, they remain abstract or hypothetical. There is no effort to influence a larger audience.
2	Students encounter a topic, problem or issue that the teacher tries to connect to students' experiences or to public problems, e.g., the teacher informs students that there is potential value in the academic content being studied because it relates to the world beyond the classroom. However, the association is vague and there is little/no evidence that students make the connection.
1	Lesson topic and activities have no clear connection to students' lives beyond the classroom; the teacher offers no justification for learning the material other than the need to perform well in class.

Adapted from Newmann, F.M., King, M.B. & Carmichael, D.L. (2007). Authentic instruction and assessment: Common standards for rigor and relevance in teaching academic subjects. Iowa Department of Education, Des Moines, IA.