

## Differentiated Instruction Observation Look-Fors

Drawn from observation tools created by Tomlinson & Hockett (2007), Tomlinson & McTighe (2008), and Hockett (2010)

**Background:** This is a tool for gathering evidence of certain sights and sounds that are hallmarks of responsive classrooms environments. Neither differentiation nor good teaching in general is a “checklist,” and no classroom, teacher, or lesson manifests all of these look-fors during a single observation. **Directions:** Check a box if there is evidence of the “look-for” during the observation.

### LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- The teacher and students respect one another.
- The teacher shows interest in students as individuals.
- There is active participation by a broad range of students.
- Students seem comfortable with one another.
- The teacher creates collaborative learning experiences.
- There is an emphasis on *student growth* toward important goals versus on *student competition*.
- There are routines and rituals in place that help students feel they belong and are valued.

**Comments:**

### LEARNING GOALS

- There is clarity about what students should know, understand, and be able to do.
- Students examine big ideas, essential questions, concepts, and/or principles.
- Students explore knowledge (e.g., facts, terms) and skills in context (e.g., of ideas, of real-world situations).
- The teacher connects learning goals to students’ interests and experiences.
- All students are working toward common learning goals.

**Comments:**

### FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

- The teacher has used pre-assessment of student readiness, interest, and learning profile to gauge students’ points of entry into the unit or lesson.
- On-going/formative assessment of student readiness, interest, and learning profile has informed the teacher’s instructional planning.
- Multiple assessments (including self assessments) and/or multiple forms of assessment are used during the lesson.
- The teacher uses assessment to gauge what students have learned.
- The teacher uses assessment to help students understand their achievement and progress.
- Significant class time is spent on inquiry and reflection.

**Comments:**

ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENT NEEDS

- The lesson/tasks make appropriate provisions for a range of student needs.
- The teacher proactively planned for differing specific student readiness, interest, and/or learning profile needs.
- There is differentiation of content (*how students access essential knowledge, understanding, and skill*).
- There is differentiation of process (*how students make sense of essential knowledge, understanding, and skill*).
- There is differentiation of product/performance (*how students demonstrate what they have come to know, understand, and be able to do*).
- The teacher uses instructional strategies that are appropriate to the lesson goals.
- The teacher uses a range of instructional strategies to support student engagement and understanding.

**Comments:**

TASKS

- Tasks require high levels of thinking.
- Tasks are appealing from a student perspective.
- Tasks represent a wise use of students' time and allow each student to work efficiently.
- Tasks approximate the thinking and/or "doing" of people who do similar work in the real world.
- Tasks are aligned with common learning goals, and with one another.
- Tasks provide appropriate challenge and/or scaffolding in anticipation of individual student needs.

**Comments:**

MANAGEMENT

- Students work in a variety of groups within a relatively short time span.
- Students know how to get and give help appropriately as needed.
- The teacher uses space, time, and materials flexibly to address varied learning needs.
- The teacher and students share responsibility for making the classroom work smoothly.
- The teacher acts as a coach or facilitator of learning for individuals and the group.
- There are clear guidelines/expectations for how students should work individually and as a group.

**Comments:**