



Tools & Talk

DATA, CONVERSATION, AND ACTION
FOR CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

By Michael Murphy



THE CLASSROOM SNAPSHOT TOOL



Date and time _____ School _____ Grade _____ Subject _____

Classroom teacher _____ Classroom activity during observation _____

RESPONSIVE, BRAIN-BASED CLASSROOMS	YES	NO
CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN		
Varieties of visible print and student work		
Group areas and open space		
Attractive, rich learning environment		
Efficient pacing of instructional time		
TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Varieties of materials and resources		
Varieties of teacher-directed strategies		
Assessment incorporated into the teaching segment		
Clear teacher instructional communication and instructional sequencing		
STUDENT RESPONSIVENESS		
Student routines and management of own learning		
Suitable, appropriate student movement		
ENGAGING STUDENT TASKS	YES	NO
CONTENT DESIGN		
Respectful tasks for all students		
Focus on student understanding		
Inquiry- and/or experience-based		
Focus on real-world application		
Differentiation of content, process, and/or product		
CONTENT DELIVERY		
Purposeful student conversation with the teacher		
Evidence of student engagement in task		
Seamless use of materials		
Varieties of instructional groupings		
COMMUNITY OF RESPECT AND LEARNING	YES	NO
CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS		
Overall culture of fairness and equality		
Respectful teacher directions		
Established and fair student routines		
Teacher capitalization on student interests		
Teacher-student connections		
CLASSROOM STANDARDS		
Visuals indicating class guidelines or desired social behaviors		
Room arrangement to support student and teacher community		
Daily learning goals posted for student and teacher view		

NOTES:

The Institute for Excellence in Urban Education, a program of the Salesmanship Club Youth and Family Centers, contributed to the development of this tool.

Source: *Tools & Talk: Data, Conversation, and Action for Classroom and School Improvement*, by Michael Murphy. Oxford, OH: NSDC, 2009.

THE ENGAGEMENT VISIT TOOL



Date and time _____ School _____ Grade _____ Subject _____

Classroom teacher _____ Classroom activity during observation _____

STUDENT NAMES					NOTES
ENGAGING TEACHER ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS					
Call on student					
Latency 5+					
Help					
Delve					
Higher-level questions and extensions					
Affirmation					
Specific praise					
Listen					
Accept feelings					
Proximity to student (teacher-initiated)					
Seek student ideas, thoughts, opinions					
Courtesy					
Personal interest or connection to student					
Touch					
Desist					
STUDENT ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS					
Raise hand					
Ask the teacher a question					
Answer teacher's question, respond					
Follow teacher's direction					
Proximity to teacher (student-initiated)					
Active listening to teacher (look at)					
Check in					
Off task with a peer					
Off task alone					
Disrupting others					

Teacher addresses whole class (tally): _____

Additional information: _____

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT SELF-RATING OF ENGAGEMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

Check ✓ only one.

	<p>I was really engaged in my class work. The lesson is important to me. I care about what my teacher asks me to do.</p>
	<p>I paid attention in class and did my work. I want to get good grades. The lesson did not seem important to me. I did my work because I was asked to do it.</p>
	<p>I did some of my work. I did some of my work and stayed out of trouble.</p>
	<p>I was bored. I did not do my work. I did not cause trouble.</p>
	<p>I did not do my work. I got in trouble in class because I did not do my work. I don't plan to change what I am doing.</p>

MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL STUDENT SELF-RATING OF ENGAGEMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

Looking back over the lesson, which of the following statements most closely reflects the way you approached the work your teacher assigned you?

Check ✓ only one.

	I have been really interested in the work and in my class. I generally do what I am asked to do because I see how the class work relates to things I care about.
	I always pay attention in class and do the work I am assigned because I want to get good grades, but I really don't see much use in what I am asked to do, and I might not do it if I didn't feel I had to.
	I do what I need to do to get by, but I really only put out as much effort as I have to in order to stay out of trouble.
	I am bored and haven't done much work for my class, but I haven't caused any trouble for my teacher.
	I have been in some trouble because I haven't done what the teacher wants me to do, but that's just the way it goes. I don't plan to change what I'm doing.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN TOOL



Date and time _____ School _____ Grade _____ Subject _____

Classroom teacher _____ Classroom activity during observation _____

	Yes	No	Notes
CLASSROOM DESIGN			
Attractive, print-rich setting			
Visible evidence of student cultures and a student "voice"			
Varieties of visuals and student work			
Physical grouping areas and open space for flexibility and communication among students			
Written and posted class guidelines or desired social behaviors			
Daily learning goals posted for class understanding			
Easily accessible, multisensory materials and supplies for all students			
LEARNING DESIGN			
Plans include instructional novelty or emotion			
Respectful and important tasks for all students			
Flexible, intentional clusters or groupings for instruction			
Evidence of modification of content, process, and/or product			
Alignment of activities to real-world or student interests			
Evidence of student learning routines and management in the activities			
Suitable, appropriate, student movement during activities			

Additional information:

THE RESPONSIVE SCHOOL SCAN TOOL



School name _____ Date and time _____

Responsive School Scan Tool team member(s) _____





INDICATORS					NOTES
WELCOMING SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT					
Is there inviting, accurate, and language-appropriate information on the outside school sign?					
Are the school's physical surroundings attractive to visitors and families?					
Is the tone of directions on all exterior entrances high-quality and friendly?					
Are visitors and families greeted and directed to sign in when they first enter the building?					
Are visitors and families warmly and appropriately greeted in the office?					
INFORMATION AND ACCESS					
Do staff in the main office exhibit friendliness, focus, and organization?					
Do visitors and families have a comfortable place to wait in the office?					
Do visitors and families have places near the office or front entrance where they can review information about the school?					
Does the school provide displays or make information readily available for parents to connect with community resources?					
Are the school's mission and vision current and displayed for parents and visitors to see?					
Does the school have a bulletin board on which parents can post announcements or news?					
Does the school have clear and fair processes for families and visitors to access school leaders?					

THE RESPONSIVE SCHOOL SCAN TOOL continued

INDICATORS					NOTES
STUDENT VOICE					
Are quality student work and student achievements displayed throughout the common areas in sensitive and attractive ways?					
Is the purpose of the displayed student work communicated in writing and in appropriate languages?					
Do common areas showcase culturally relevant posters, pictures, or displays?					
Does the media center or teacher resource room contain varieties of culturally responsive materials and resources?					
Do students in common areas demonstrate a sense of focus, purpose, and orderliness?					
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS					
Are the classrooms designed to be intellectually attractive and stimulating to the students?					
Do classrooms include pictures, artifacts, or displays that reflect the students who occupy them?					
Do classrooms include areas for small groups and comfortable places to work and study?					
Does the teacher's classroom appear to be designed for a variety of student groupings?					
Does the teacher use a variety of materials for instruction?					
Has the teacher posted fair and clear procedures for students to view and use to manage their own behavior?					
Does the teacher appear to use fair and equitable management strategies that support student learning and achievement?					





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THE RESPONSIVE SCHOOL SCAN TOOL continued

INDICATORS					NOTES
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOMS <small>continued</small>					
Has the teacher set clear goals for achievement?					
Do displays of classroom work honor and promote high-quality student learning?					
Do students seem engaged in their learning?					
Have teachers capitalized on student interests and/or real-world connections?					

NOTES AND QUESTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

KEY

	Museum quality. There was evidence of extremely high quality.
	Meets the target. The indicator met the operational definition and was on target.
	Needs work. Evidence shows either preliminary or partial effort. Varying and/or inconsistent evidence was noted, and it is recommended that the team construct new efforts to meet this indicator.
	Didn't find it. The indicator was not found to be present at the time of the team visit.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT TOOL



Teacher's name _____ School _____ Date/time _____

Grade level/subject _____ Completed by _____

TEACHER DESIGN INTENTIONALITY	YES	NO	?
PHYSICAL SPACE			
The classroom arrangement supports ease of movement.			
Classroom design promotes flexible use of space and groupings.			
Materials are easily accessible to students.			
CLASS GUIDELINES			
Clear visuals indicate class rules and/or expectations.			
The teacher has posted daily learning goals for students to see.			
CLASSROOM CLIMATE			
Student work is displayed to model excellence.			
The environment is attractive and student-centered.			
The classroom shows evidence of student voice and culture.			
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN			
Students experience differentiation and/or choices.			
The teacher includes novelty or emotion in instruction.			
Instruction relates to students' lives or interests.			

TEACHER DELIVERY	YES	NO	?
THE TEACHER:			
Frequently uses established procedures.			
Consistently asks students to adhere to rules.			
Clearly states directions and requirements.			
Is both firm and soft in delivering requests.			
Uses proximity and/or touch.			
Intervenes appropriately to manage student behavior.			
Uses positive reinforcement.			
Varies voice in tone and volume.			
Uses appropriate nonverbal signs to manage behavior.			
Seeks students' ideas, thoughts, and/or opinions.			
Effectively balances between teacher instruction and practice.			

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THE INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT TOOL continued

ROUTINE TRANSITIONS		
TRANSITION DESCRIPTION	TIME	STUDENT COMPLIANCE

STUDENT ATTENTION TO REQUESTS IN TERMS OF:

SUITABLE, APPROPRIATE STUDENT MOVEMENT DURING ACTIVITIES:

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS:

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:

QUESTIONS FOR THE EXCHANGE