# Observation and Feedback Tool

This tool supports classroom observers to identify and provide feedback on culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices aligned to *DESE's Professional Standards for Teacher (PST's)* and the CAP 7 Essential Elements. All components should be delivered in the context of a culturally responsive environment. This tool is designed to be used during Teacher Candidate observations in the practicum semester, during full class period or block and includes three main standards derived from the *PST's*: curriculum planning and assessment, teaching all students, and professional culture.

| Curriculum Planning & Assessment | Teaching all Students | Professional Culture |
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| Instructional practices that demonstrate Essential Elements pertaining to: *Subject Matter Knowledge, Well-structured Units and Lessons*, and *Adjustments to Practice.* | Instructional practices that demonstrate Essential Elements pertaining to: *Meeting Diverse Needs* of students, nurturing and supporting a *Safe Learning Environment*, and communicating and supporting *High Expectations* for learning. | Practices that demonstrate a commitment to professional standards, culture, and development which include the Essential Element of *Reflective Practice.* |

***Culturally Responsive Practice is foundational to the application of the above standards in practice.***

### Culturally Responsive Practice

Culturally responsive teaching is synonymous with good teaching. Culturally responsive teaching happens in classrooms that foster and support students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges to deepen their learning, examine the systems in which they operate, and address systemic inequities. Cultural responsiveness provides affirming and empowering learning experiences that foster academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). In culturally responsive learning environments, evidence-based instruction is essential to harnessing, supporting, and cultivating the talents and knowledge of all students. This tool highlights culturally responsive practices (**see italicized descriptors**) that an observer may expect to see in their observation of teacher candidates. These look-fors are intended to stimulate discussion, reflection, and feedback. They are not exhaustive of all aspects of culturally responsive practice.

## Using This Tool

**BEFORE the observation**
- ✓ **Read the *Look-Fors*** as a guide to the practices you should expect to observe, as they represent key observable components of effective instruction. When possible, confer with the teacher candidate in advance to learn more about the lesson and how these practices may be evidenced.

**DURING the observation**
- ✓ As you observe, **focus on what the teacher and students are saying and doing** relative to the Look-Fors, in small groups and whole group where applicable.
- ✓ **Record your observations** in the Notes column of the Look-Fors document or on a separate page. These are *your* notes and will not need to be shared win their entirety with the candidate. Be aware of the required essential elements, indicated by an X at the top of the observation form. You may take notes and add feedback related to characteristics of the other essential elements as well.

> **Note:** As an observer, it is important to continuously reflect on the ways bias, assumptions, or preferences about instruction may be present in how you interpret and judge practice. Consider ways to mitigate those biases in this observation and on an ongoing basis.

**AFTER the observation**
- ✓ **Meet with Teacher Candidate**. Invite their input related to what went well and what might be improved. Highlight key takeaways from your observation.
- ✓ **Review the *Look-Fors*.** Reflect on the extent to which each Look For was observed with quality during the lesson.
- ✓ **Draft feedback** to the teacher candidate, identifying areas of strengths and areas for growth in relation to the Look-Fors.
- ✓ **Synthesize and categorize** your evidence into the table on the corresponding CAP Observation Form.
- ✓ **Debrief** the observation with the teacher candidate to discuss reflections and next steps.
- ✓ **Include evidence** from the observation that will inform the teacher candidate's formative and/or summative assessments, specifically related to focus elements (i.e., 1.A.1 Subject Matter Knowledge, 1.A.3 Well-Structured Units and Lessons, etc.) and culturally responsive practice.

| PROFICIENT DESCRIPTOR | Did the *teacher...* | Were the *students* | *Notes* |
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| **Subject Matter Knowledge**<br>Demonstrates sound knowledge, understanding and evidence-based, culturally responsive pedagogical practices that consistently engage students in learning experiences which enable them to develop, acquire and apply grade-level knowledge and subject-specific skills and vocabulary, such that they are able to make and assess evidence-based claims and arguments and apply knowledge and skills. Uses culturally responsive curricular materials and instructional supports that allow students to synthesize content and connect it to their own lives. | ❑ Identify important concepts of the subject matter and their relationships to one another?<br>❑ Convey accurate content to students, providing clear explanations that effectively guide student thinking without doing the work for the students?<br>❑ **Create learning experiences that allow for multiple perspectives and correct responses and enable students to acquire complex knowledge and skills?**<br>❑ Create a learning environment where students build on prior knowledge and skills to develop new understandings?<br>❑ *Refer to relevant, real world, and community-based context and occurrences?*<br>❑ *Encourage students to examine and discuss examples and occurrences of stereotypes and biases?* | ❑ Demonstrating higher-order thinking through comments, questions, activity?<br>❑ Frequently reading, writing, and/or engaging in collaborative dialogue about material they are learning?<br>❑ Building on prior knowledge and skills to develop new understanding?<br>❑ *Use critical, content specific vocabulary accurately and within the context to articulate their learning?*<br>❑ *Discuss global and communal issues of (in)equity and social justice and exploring different viewpoints?* | |
| **Well-structured Units & Lessons**<br>Adapts as needed and implements standards-based units comprised of well-structured units and lessons with challenging tasks and measurable outcomes; appropriate student engagement strategies, pacing, sequence, resources, and grouping; purposeful questioning; and strategic use of technology & digital media; such that students are able to learn the knowledge and skills defined in state standards/local curricula. Ensures a coherent instructional approach that builds student learning towards grade-level standards or individual learning goals over time through aligned lesson goals, scope, sequence, and tasks.<br>**Look for evidence of...**<br>✓ Well-structured units and lessons with challenging, measurable objectives<br>✓ Appropriate student engagement strategies<br>✓ Good pacing and sequencing activities | ❑ Develop a comprehensive system (using multiple formative *and* summative approaches) to assess student understanding during lesson(s) and throughout unit (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion, project, quiz, etc.)?<br>❑ Provide multiple ways and opportunities to students to demonstrate their learning.<br>❑ *Create opportunities for students to be able to draw from their cultural and linguistic knowledge and lived experiences.*<br>❑ Use up-to-date student assessment data to plan and, when necessary, adjust student groups, lesson objectives, and lesson activities.<br>❑ Develop the ability to anticipate student understanding or misconceptions and is prepared with alternative and differentiated lesson activities and materials?<br>❑ Provide students with in-class and/or out of class opportunities to practice skills that need further development and take on challenging extension activities?<br>❑ Conduct frequent checks for student understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly? | ❑ Provided in-class opportunities to practice skills that need further development and take on challenging extension activities?<br>❑ Advocating for themselves when needing additional supports; able to explain specifically where they need support?<br>❑ Able to self-assess their learning and progress?<br>❑ *Spending majority of lesson thinking, reading, writing, or talking about the lesson's objectives?*<br>❑ *Able to convey understanding of key concepts & themes?* | |

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| ✓ Appropriate use of materials, resources, and technology; and<br>✓ Thoughtful grouping strategies | ❑ Effectively receive and apply constructive feedback from students, SP, and/or PS?<br>❑ *Create and/or select fact and opinion-based materials that invite students to offer counter perspectives?*<br>❑ *Create and/or select materials that involve and value diverse student identities?*<br>❑ *Create and/or select materials that showcase sensitive/difficult content in justice-oriented ways?* | | |
| **Adjustments to Practice**<br>Organizes and analyzes results from a wide range of assessment data and feedback from colleagues, students, and families to determine progress toward intended outcomes; uses findings to adjust practice and identify and/or implement appropriate differentiated and scaffolded interventions and enhancements for improved and more equitable student learning outcomes. Works to understand each student's strengths and areas for growth; measures and monitors students' understanding throughout instruction and their progress toward grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals to actively inform instructional decisions.<br>**Look for evidence of...**<br>✓ Ability to organize and analyze assessment results to determine progress toward desired outcomes.<br>✓ Use of assessment results to inform adjustments to practice.<br>✓ Assessment tasks, methods and instruments maintain the rigor and high expectations outlined in the grade-level standards and do not perpetuate racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. | ❑ Develop a comprehensive system (using multiple formative *and* summative approaches) to assess student understanding during lesson(s) and throughout unit (e.g., exit slips, classroom discussion, project, quiz, etc.)?<br>❑ Provide multiple ways and opportunities to students to demonstrate their learning.<br>❑ Create opportunities for students to be able to draw from their cultural and linguistic knowledge and lived experiences.<br>❑ Use up-to-date student assessment data to plan and, when necessary, adjust student groups, lesson objectives, and lesson activities?<br>❑ *Develop the ability to anticipate student understanding or misconceptions and is prepared with alternative and differentiated lesson activities and materials overcome those misconceptions?*<br>❑ Provide students with in-class and/or out of class opportunities to practice skills that need further development and take on challenging extension activities?<br>❑ Conduct frequent checks for student understanding and adjusting instruction accordingly?<br>❑ Effectively seek, receive and/or apply constructive feedback from students, SP, and/or PS? | ❑ Provided in-class opportunities to practice skills that need further development and take on challenging extension activities?<br>❑ Advocating for themselves when they need additional supports, and able to explain specifically where they needed support?<br>❑ Able to self-assess their learning and progress? | |
| **Meeting Diverse Needs**<br>Uses appropriate inclusive practices, including tiered instruction and scaffolds, educational and assistive technologies, and use of students' native language to make grade-level content accessible and affirming for all students; accommodates differences in learning styles, needs, interests, and levels of readiness, including those of students with disabilities and English learners.<br>**Look for evidence of...** | ❑ Use students' learning styles, interests, and needs to plan diverse, standards-aligned lessons and homework tasks? (As semester progresses, did frequency of well-aligned lessons increase?).<br>❑ *Use a variety of instructional techniques to scaffold, accommodate, and modify the lesson to meet the needs of a diverse learning community?*<br>❑ Ensure that all students can access all classroom resources by providing access to grade-level instruction, including | ❑ On-task, focused, engaged and displaying high levels of effort for most of the lesson?<br>❑ When prompted, able to articulate multiple methods to demonstrate knowledge and access information?<br>❑ Responsive to scaffolded and differentiated strategies? | |

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| - Tiered instruction and scaffolds based on student needs; and<br>- Appropriate strategies for teaching students with disabilities and English language learners | utilizing necessary supplemental resources, technologies, and/or tiered supports?<br>❑ Work to ensure that students were on-task, focused and displaying high levels of effort for nearly the entire lesson?<br>❑ Evaluate student work and effort against specified criteria and expectations, and often provides students and parents with feedback?<br>❑ *Build on and draw from knowledge of their students' identities, skills, developmental levels, cultures, languages, and communities to provide relevant and differentiated learning experiences that enable all students to exercise social-emotional skills (e.g. self-management and making responsible decisions) and progress towards grade-level standards?* | ❑ *Build their own positive identities as learners in the classroom?*<br>❑ Access multiple supports beyond the teacher when they are stuck (e.g., peer collaboration, anchor charts, exemplars, manipulatives, etc.)?<br>❑ *Make academic choices and are seen selecting assignment of their preference?* | |
| **Safe Learning Environment**<br>Co-creates meaningful rituals and routines with students. Uses these rituals, routines, and appropriate responses to create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment. Builds positive, caring relationships to ensure all students feel valued, respected, equitably supported, and a sense of belonging in the classroom community where students take academic risks and most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented.<br>**Look for evidence of...**<br>- Rituals and routines that create and maintain a safe physical and intellectual environment<br>- Use of appropriate preventative strategies and responses to address student behavior; and<br>- Students taking academic risks | ❑ *Classroom physically arranged in alignment with the learning activities that ensure all students have unobstructed access to learning materials?*<br>❑ Ensure that interactions with and among students are kind, supportive, and respectful?<br>❑ Create an intellectual environment where students were able to take academic risks by attempting challenging tasks?<br>❑ Provide clear expectations for how students should collaborate, such as instruction on how to work together and explicit roles for group work?<br>❑ Reinforce classroom norms, routines, and procedures so that students could follow with minimal prompting?<br>❑ Affirm and adjust behaviors that meets or fall short of the classroom expectations?<br>❑ Model and reinforce respect for and affirmation of their own and others' differences related to background, identity, language, strengths, and challenges (self- and social awareness)?<br>❑ *Display artifacts reflective of and affirming to students' identities?*<br>❑ *Arranged their classroom in a manner that promotes collaboration and cooperation?*<br>❑ *Use language that is empowering and affirming to all identities and members of the classroom community?* | ❑ Participating frequently, without indication that limited participation was due to classroom-based concerns or anxieties?<br>❑ Rarely disruptive and address peers and teacher with consideration and respect?<br>❑ Supporting one another's learning and well-being without prompts from the teacher?<br>❑ Taking ownership of and demonstrating investment in classroom norms, routines, and procedures?<br>❑ Demonstrating willingness to make mistakes (as part of learning process) and take academic risks?<br>❑ *Asking thoughtful questions, appear to feel safe, and are confidently sharing their opinions and perspectives?*<br>❑ Working respectfully and productively in pairs or groups, with each student contributing and | |

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| | | ❏ accomplishing the assigned task?<br>❏ *Respectfully disagreeing with each other and defending arguments with evidence?*<br>❏ *Able to internalize routines and that are efficiently and seamlessly executed?* | |
| **High Expectations**<br>Effectively models and reinforces ways that students can master challenging material through effective effort, rather than having to depend on innate ability.<br>**Look for evidence of...**<br>  ✓ Modeling how to apply effort to master challenging material; and<br>  ✓ Reinforcing the application of effort to master material | ❏ Define criteria for high quality work by using examples, rubrics, and models high quality work with guided practice?<br>❏ Explain/model expectations for quality effort, such as students' participation, time management, attention, and integration of feedback into work?<br>❏ Uses developmentally and intellectually rigorous instructional practices and materials?<br>❏ Use instructional practices and materials tailored to student needs, experiences, and interests to encourage student focus and active participation?<br>❏ Use instructional techniques that facilitate equitable, active student participation?<br>❏ Model how students can master challenging material and meet learning goals through effective effort?<br>❏ Convey to students (and families and colleagues) that all students are able to produce high quality work and demonstrate effective effort, and encourage them to do so?<br>❏ *Direct students to give their classmates complete attention when they are sharing?* | ❏ Indicate capacity to complete assigned tasks and/or offer a rationale for their capacity?<br>❏ Ask questions and make comments that reveal deep engagement with the objectives?<br>❏ Persevering in completing tasks, and seek out resources and supports when faced with challenging work?<br>❏ Use additional resources or strategies for support when faced with a challenging task?<br>❏ *Students are engaged with the content and motivated to share their pieces of their identity with their peers?* | |
| **Reflective Practice**<br>Regularly reflects on the effectiveness of lessons, units, and interactions with students, both individually and with colleagues, and uses insights gained to improve practice and student learning. Reflects on the effectiveness of instruction and how one's identities, biases, and practices impact student learning and well-being; and works to improve practice and eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities, such that all students can meet or exceed grade-level standards. | ❏ Establish and implement a plan to accurately reflect on effectiveness of learning activities and interactions with students with colleagues?<br>❏ Establish a plan to regularly identify aspects of lessons, units, and interactions with students that were less effective and uses this information to refine practice and improve student learning?<br>❏ Reflect upon how biases, identities, and hegemonic ideas and approaches in their practice can be challenged to ensure that they are meeting the needs of all learners?<br>❏ Effectively receive and consider constructive feedback on their teaching? | ❏ Provided opportunity to give feedback to teacher about their teaching, the lesson, activity, etc.? | |

| **Look for evidence of...**<br>✓ Willingness and ability to reflect on the impact of lessons and interactions with students; and<br>✓ Ability to improve practice and impact on student learning based on reflections | | | |
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**Adapted from Boston Public Schools Teacher "Look-Fors," Massachusetts DOE frameworks & observation tools, and the Massachusetts Department of Education culturally responsive teaching rubric.**