

### **Sample T-TESS Pre-Observation Conference Protocol**

Prior to announced observations, observers conduct a pre-conference meeting to obtain pertinent background information about the lesson plan and students involved for additional context, and to address any potential areas of concern before the lesson. During the pre-conference, the teacher being observed engages in a coaching conversation with the observer. As part of this conversation, the observer asks questions about the lesson plan, grouping structures, classroom configuration, specific students, etc. The teacher provides background information, including the makeup of the students in the class; the context of this lesson in the larger unit plan; assessment information; extenuating circumstances; and evidence of planning with the rubrics. In the pre-conference meeting, teachers are provided with specific support for improvement when possible.

Suggestions:

- Conduct the pre-conference one to three days prior to the scheduled observation
- Sit next to the teacher with whom you are conferencing and maintain eye contact
- Show signs of active listening, including taking notes during the conference
- Paraphrase what the teacher is saying in order to demonstrate active listening
- Provide a summary at the end
- It is the observer's responsibility to inform a teacher during the pre-conference if the lesson plan needs to be adjusted
- Adapt your questioning and use the teacher's responses to develop probing follow-up questions during the pre-conference.

The following questions may be used to guide discussion during the pre-observation conference. Responses to the questions below will help the observer understand the classroom being observed in addition to providing evidence that will be used to determine component ratings for Domain 1. The component(s) listed for each question to align your responses to the CPS Framework for Teaching.

NOTE: Consider bringing the unit plan, in addition to the lesson plan, to the pre-observation conference.

#### **1. What objectives will be addressed in the lesson?**

The objectives that will be addressed in the lesson include 3 TEKS Objectives. This is a guided practice, therefore it built for students who still need to practice after the units first formal assessment.

- The first objective is 7.10A: Observe and describe how different environments, including microhabitats in schoolyards and biomes, support different varieties of organisms.
- The second objective is 7.10B: Describe how biodiversity contributes to the sustainability of an ecosystem.
- The third objective 7.10C: Observe, record, and describe the role of ecological succession such as in a microhabitat of a garden with weeds.

2. What do you expect the students to know and be able to do after the lesson?  
Students will be able to correctly place in order the plants that occur during ecological succession.

3. Where is this lesson in the context of your unit plan?  
As mentioned previously, this lesson is designed to enable additional practice for students who have not shown complete mastery of the concepts. This is a guided practice activity.

So here you are addressing three TEKS objectives. The reason for this is because you find the need for an additional practice to enhance the mastery of all students.

4. What are the prerequisite skills that the students have to know in order to be successful?  
in this lesson?

- Prior to this lesson, students have already received several lessons on this topic. These lessons are structured in the 5E lesson cycle.
- In sixth grade, students were expected to know *biotic and abiotic parts of an ecosystems in which organisms interact*. Additionally, students are expected to know the levels or organization within an ecosystem including organism, population, community, and ecosystem.
- Beginning standards have also been introduced in grades three and fifth.

*Prior to this lesson, students have had the opportunity to build their skills on organism's interactions in ecological systems. Students are expected to be familiar with the concept.*

5. 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.
- In a class of 25 students, there are four students that will require accommodations such as extra time and extra assistance. These students will be receiving assistance from the special education teacher.
  - There are 2 English Language Learners, these students will be seated next to an academically high achieving student.

In your class, there are learning needs that affect a portion of your student population. These are special education students and English Language Learners. You have provided ways to prepare and meet their needs. There will be an additional teacher providing extra help for these students. How will the inclusion teacher be aware of how to best help the students?

The inclusion teacher meets with me weekly to review lesson plans. She has a detailed plan of my lessons with what is expected and practices on how to best help students.

6. How will you differentiate your instruction in order to address a variety of learning styles?

Students will be assigned differentiating roles after the cards have been ordered correctly and checked off by the teacher. These include frayer model and artistic representation. Not all students may be assigned an additional role.

7. Are there any particular grouping structures in place? If so, how will you hold students accountable for group work?

Yes, students are always seated in groups at lab tables. Students have been working in collaborative groups the entire year. They are very aware of their expectations. Accountability is perceived through individual participation in group and independent assignment turn in.

8. How will you assess whether or not students met the objectives for the lesson?

After I have modeled and reviewed the fundamental concepts. Student groups will be and informally assessed. Students will show teacher completion of ecological time card sort, explain their reasoning as a group to the teacher, and complete a writing piece explaining their understanding.

9. Is there anything in particular you want me to be observing with regard to your areas of

reinforcement and refinement?

Yes, I would like for you to observe student learning effectiveness. I would like to know if students are working cooperatively. I would like to know if they are able to prove their learning through their independent writing piece. I want to know if it reflects what the group answers or if each students includes their own depth of understanding.

In addition, for the overall observation, key points you would like me to observe include:

- Students working cooperatively in groups
- Evidence of student learning through independent writing
- Defined measures of high-order student learning in writing

10. What are your plans for lesson closure and reflection?

Students turn in their independent writing piece. Secondly, the class reviews learning outcomes in a 2-minute discussion. Last, students have the opportunity to leave a sticky note on the parking lot if there are more questions.

11. Are there any other special circumstances that I should be aware of before the announced observation?

Yes. Jimmie has been very disruptive lately. I would like to know if you can recommend how to address this problem?

You would like for me to assist you in our post-conference for finding solutions to address this classroom management issue that may affect your student's overall learning?

12. Is there anything else you would like to discuss before the observation?

No, I am simply excited to hear your feedback.

- Let's go over key points of your lesson.
- You are addressing three TEKS objectives that are integrated in your unit.
- This is a guided practice activity in which students will sort ecological time cards and provide a written piece explaining the reasoning behind the order.
- Some students requiring extra help due to disabilities or language setbacks will receive assistance in designated ways.
- Students are working collaboratively in groups.
- Some students that require accelerated instruction will be given additional "roles" to complete for the group.
- Conclusively, after modeling, guided practice, and independent work, you will be closing the lesson with a classroom discussion.
- There are key points you are looking for me to address.
- You would like assistance on improving classroom management in accordance to a specific student.

Yes! You have correctly summarized all key points.  
I look forward to my observation.