

# OBSERVING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

## Purpose and Focus of Observation

Student engagement on worthwhile tasks has long been identified in research as a key element of effective learning and teaching. Sometimes preservice teachers, intent on their own 'performance' as teachers in classrooms, are not aware of the level of academic engagement of all learners. The following tool is a simple way to record apparent engagement of a selected group of students. Video-recording is particularly useful for this observation as well, especially if observer and observed watch the video together and share perceptions.

## DIRECTIONS FOR OBSERVING STUDENT ON- TASK AND OFF-TASK BEHAVIOUR

Preservice teacher and school-based teacher educator should discuss ways of knowing when a student is on task, and discuss other student behaviours they may choose to code observe, e.g.

- A = at task
- AT = at task with teacher
- TK = talking
- P = playing
- O = out of seat
- OR = out of room
- OT = off task

Negotiate a time and duration for observation a short period of time is recommended – maybe 10 minutes.

Decide which students will be targeted for observation, and discuss reasons for choosing those children. It may be useful to do this several times, targeting 'noisy' learners, then 'good' workers, then 'quiet' learners, ect. (choosing only about 5 or students is recommended)..

List students' names according to their seating arrangement.

Observer sits at side of room where all students can be observed, scans targeted students at 5 minute intervals, records student behaviour.

Sample of observed behaviours:

STUDENT	TIME WHEN SWEEP BEGAN							
	9:00	9:05	9:10	9:15	9:20	9:25	9:30	9:35
Tania	A	A	AT	A	A	A	OR	A
Manuel	A	A	AT	AT	A	OR	A	A
Vivian	AT	TK	TK	AT	AT	TK	AT	TK
Nurit	O	O	P	P	OT	O	O	OT
Joseph	OT	OT	AT	P	A	A	P	P
Michael	OT	OT	AT	P	O	AT	A	TK

### 1. Summary of discussion with Mentor Teacher (Preservice teacher to notate)

### 2. Preservice teacher personal reflection.

**Recording Sheet for Student Engagement**

Preservice Teacher Name								
Date:					Day of the week			
Context (Subject, after lunch):								
Start time of observation:					End time of observation:			
STUDENT	TIME			WHEN	SWEEP	BEGAN		
	9:00	9:05	9:10	9:15	9:20	9:25	9:30	9:35

Key:

A = at task

AT = at task with teacher

TK = talking

P = playing

O = out of seat

OR = out of room

OT = off task

**3. Summary of discussion with Mentor Teacher (Preservice teacher to notate)**
**4. Preservice teacher personal reflection.**