

Marzano Observational Protocol

Marzano Research Laboratory Englewood, Colorado September, 2009 (09) INTRODUCTION

Effective use of the Marzano Observational Protocol requires an understanding of *The Art and Science of Teaching* (Marzano, 2007) which is a comprehensive framework for effective instruction. The basis of *The Art and Science of Teaching* is 10 design questions which are to be used by teachers to plan effective units and lessons within those units. These design questions are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Design Questions for *The Art and Science of Teaching*

1. What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?
2. What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?
3. What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?
4. What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?
5. What will I do to engage students?
6. What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?

7. What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?
8. What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?
9. What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?
10. What will I do to develop effective lessons organized into a cohesive unit?

These design questions not only provide a planning framework for teachers but they also provide a framework for observing classroom instruction. For this later purpose they must be reorganized to represent three different categories of behavior or “lesson segments” that might be observed. These three types of segments are:

Lesson Segments that Involve Routine Events that Might be Observed in Every Lesson

Design Question 1: What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?

Design Question 6: What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?

Lesson Segments that Address Content:

Design Question 2: What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?

Design Question 3: What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?

Design Question 4: What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?

Lesson Segments that Are Enacted on the Spot:

Design Question 5: What will I do to engage students?

Design Question 6: What will I do to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?

Design Question 7: What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures?

Design Question 8: What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?

Design Question 9: What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?

Design Question 10 is not included in the observational protocol because it involves the organization of lessons into cohesive units, and, therefore, is not amenable to observation during a specific lesson.

Using the Observational Protocol

When using the Observational Protocol, the observer must continually ask himself or herself the following questions:

What am I observing right now?

Is it a lesson segment that involves routine behaviors that might be observed in every lesson?

Is it a lesson segment that addresses content in specific ways?

Is it a lesson segment that must be enacted on the spot?

In the case of content lesson segments, the observer must further ask himself or herself the following questions:

Is this a lesson segment that involves new content?

Is this a lesson segment involving practicing and deepening knowledge?

Is this a lesson segment involving hypothesis generation and testing?

Guided by the questions above, the observer fills out the appropriate section of the observational protocol. Thus, not all parts of the Observational Protocol would be filled out in a given observation. For example, if the observer determines that the lesson involves practicing and deepening knowledge, he or she would not fill out the sections of the protocol pertaining to lesson segments involving new knowledge or segments involving hypothesis generation and testing. Likewise, if no incident in the class arose regarding the need to recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures, this section of the protocol would be left blank

Noting What Is Observed

To capture what is occurring in the classroom an observer can mark the specific teacher behaviors for each element. Another option is to take notes in the space provided for each element. Still another option is to “rate” the person being observed using the following scale in the space provided for each element:

Not Using (NU): Strategy was called for but no exhibited

Beginning (B): Uses the strategy but incorrectly or parts are missing

Developing (D): Uses the strategy but in a mechanistic way

Applying (A): Uses the strategy and monitors student behavior to determine if strategy is having the desired effect

Innovating (I): Adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations

Using the Observational Protocol for Teacher Self-Ratings

One use of the Observational Protocol is for teachers to rate themselves on the scale provided above for each element of the model. In this case a teacher would simply score himself or herself on each of the elements for each lesson segment. In addition to using the scale I, A, D, B, and NU the teacher might check the specific behaviors he or she considers strengths. The teacher might also record notes to describe strategies not listed or adaptations to strategies.

Using the Observational Protocol for Teacher Self-Observation

Another use of the Observational Protocol is for teacher self-observation. Here the teacher observes one or more video-tapes of himself or herself. In this case the teacher would follow the same procedure as an observer asking the questions:

What am I observing right now?

Is it a lesson segment that involves routine behaviors that might be observed in every lesson?

Is it a lesson segment that addresses content in specific ways?

Is it a lesson segment that must be enacted on the spot?

The teacher would check specific behaviors observed, record additional information not included in the list of teacher behaviors, and rate himself or herself on the elements observed using the scale I, A, D, B, and NU.

Using the Observational Protocol for Walkthroughs

Walkthroughs are one of the most popular techniques currently used for collecting observational data. They are typically about three to five minutes in duration and are lead by administrators, supervisors, and instructional coaches. **It is important to note that walkthroughs do not provide good data for individual teacher feedback.** This is because they are far too short in duration to obtain a picture of an individual teacher's behaviors. However, walkthroughs are useful in obtaining a snapshot of the overall behavior of teachers in a building or in a district. When this is the intended use, summary data from walkthroughs should be reported by the three major types of lesson segments and the specific elements within those segments. For example, as a result of a series of walkthroughs a school might record that 20% of the time routines were observed, 60% of the time lesson segments involving content were observed, and 20% of the time lesson segments involving behaviors that were enacted on the spot were observed. Additionally, within each of the three types of segments, specific behaviors for specific design questions might be reported. For example, a school might report that during the 60% of the time when content segments were being observed, over 90% of the lessons dealt with students interacting with new knowledge (Design Question 2). Finally the school might report on frequencies of specific strategies used within a design question. In effect, a report that was based on a series of walkthroughs would have three sections: (1) the frequency of types of segments, (2) the frequency of design questions within segments, and (3) the frequency of specific strategies within each design question observed.

The procedure for conducting a walkthrough is straightforward. Again, the observer asks:

What am I observing right now?

Is it a lesson segment that involves routine behaviors that might be observed in every lesson?

Is it a lesson segment that addresses content in specific ways?

Is it a lesson segment that must be enacted on the spot?

Using the Observational Protocol for Complete Observations

As opposed to walkthroughs, complete observations occur for an extended period of time—ideally an entire class period. While observations can be unannounced they are more frequently planned by the observer and the teacher being observed. Typically this involves a preconference where the observer and the teacher identify what will be the focus of the observation. For example, it might be determined that during the observation the teacher will be conducting a lesson in which students are going to be practicing and deepening their knowledge (Design Question 3). The teacher might ask for specific feedback on how she conducts an activity involving similarities and differences—one of the elements common to that type of lesson. Additionally, the teacher might ask for feedback on the extent to which she does a good job when communicating learning goals and tracking student progress—both aspects of Design Question 1 which most commonly manifest as routine behavior during most if not all lessons. Finally, the teacher might also request feedback on the extent to which she stays aware of student engagement and makes adjustments as necessary. This is from Design Question 5 and commonly manifests as activities that are enacted on the spot. In short, the preconference is intended to set the stage for what will be the focus of the observation. After the observation, a post-conference is typically scheduled. There the teacher and observer review the data from the observation comparing and contrasting their perceptions of the lesson.

When making a complete observation, the attention of the observer is much more focused than in other situations. Since the observer and the teacher have discussed the upcoming lesson, sections of the Observational Protocol that will be of most importance have already been identified making data collection much more efficient.

Using the Observational Protocol for Instructional Rounds

Instructional rounds have a very different purpose and format from any of the previously mentioned techniques for collecting data. First, the observers are teachers as opposed to administrators, supervisors, or instructional coaches. Small groups of teachers make relatively brief observations of their fellow teachers. These observations are longer than a walkthrough (i.e. longer than three to five minutes), but typically shorter than an entire class period. The idea is for these groups of teachers to have as many substantive observations of classrooms within part of a day or the entire day. A second major difference in instructional rounds is they

are not for the purpose of providing feedback to the teacher being observed. While the observing group of teachers might summarize their group's observations and make them available to the observed teacher, the primary purpose of instructional rounds is for the teachers making the observations to compare their practices with those observed in the classrooms they visited. Consequently, at the end of a set of instructional rounds, teachers involved in those rounds discuss what they observed and how it is different from or similar to what they typically do in their classrooms. For example, one observer teacher might note that in one of the classes she saw a teacher using a strategy for examining errors in reasoning (See Design Question #3) but did so in a way that seemed to produce better results than she typically produces. The entire tone of the debriefing should be on reflective practice, not on evaluating the teachers who were observed.

References

Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Marzano Observation Protocol Short Form

I. Lesson Segments Involving Routine Events					
Design Question #1: What will I do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success?					
1. Providing clear learning goals and scales to measure those goals (e.g. the teacher provides or reminds students about a specific learning goal)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
2. Tracking student progress (e.g. using formative assessment the teacher helps students chart their individual and group progress on a learning goal)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
3. Celebrating student success (e.g. the teacher helps student acknowledge and celebrate current status on a learning goal as well as knowledge gain)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
Design Question #6: What will I do to establish and maintain classroom rules and procedures?					
4. Establishing classroom routines (e.g. the teacher reminds students of a rule or procedure or establishes a new rule or procedure)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
5. Organizing the physical layout of the classroom for learning (e.g. the teacher organizes materials, traffic patterns, and displays to enhance learning)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
II. Lesson Segments Addressing Content					
Design Question #2: What will I do to help students effectively interact with new knowledge?					
1. Identifying critical information (e.g. the teacher provides cues as to which information is important)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
2. Organizing students to interact with new knowledge (e.g. the teacher organizes students into dyads or triads to discuss small chunks of content)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B

<p>3. Previewing new content (e.g. the teacher uses strategies such as: K-W-L, advance organizers, preview questions)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>4. Chunking content into “digestible bites” (e.g. the teacher presents content in small portions that are tailored to students’ level of understanding)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>5. Group processing of new information (e.g. after each chunk of information, the teacher asks students to summarize and clarify what they have experienced)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>6. Elaborating on new information (e.g. the teacher asks questions that require students to make and defend inferences)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>7. Recording and representing knowledge (e.g. the teacher ask students to summarize, take notes, or use non-linguistic representations)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>8. Reflecting on learning (e.g. the teacher asks students to reflect on what they understand or what they are still confused about)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>Design Question #3: What will I do to help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge?</p>		
<p>9. Reviewing content (e.g. the teacher briefly reviews related content addressed previously)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>10. Organizing students to practice and deepen knowledge (e.g. the teacher organizes students into groups designed to review information or practice skills)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>11. Using homework (e.g. the teacher uses homework for independent practice or to elaborate on information)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU
<p>12. Examining similarities and differences (e.g. the teacher engages students in comparing , classifying, creating analogies and metaphors)</p>	Notes	
		I A D B NU

<p>13. Examining errors in reasoning (e.g. the teacher asks students to examine informal fallacies, propaganda, bias)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>14. Practicing skills, strategies, and processes (the teacher uses massed and distributed practice)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>15. Revising knowledge (e.g. the teacher asks students to revise entries in notebooks to clarify and add to previous information)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>Design Question #4: What will I do to help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge?</p>							
<p>16. Organizing students for cognitively complex tasks (e.g. the teachers organizes students into small groups to facilitate cognitively complex tasks)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>17. Engaging students in cognitively complex tasks involving hypothesis generating and testing (e.g. the teacher engages students in decision making tasks, problem solving tasks, experimental inquiry tasks, investigation tasks)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>18. Providing resources and guidance (e.g. the teacher makes resources available that are specific to cognitively complex tasks and helps students execute such tasks)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p style="text-align: center;">III. Lesson Segments Enacted on the Spot</p>							
<p>Design Question #5: What will I do to engage students?</p>							
<p>1. Noticing and reacting when students are not engaged (e.g. the teacher scans the classroom to monitor students' level of engagement)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>2. Using academic games (e.g. when students are not engaged, the teachers uses adaptations of popular games to reengage them and focus their attention on academic content)</p>	<p>Notes</p>						
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>I</td> <td>A</td> <td>D</td> <td>B</td> <td>NU</td> </tr> </table>	I	A	D	B	NU
I	A	D	B	NU			
<p>3. Managing response rates during questioning (e.g. the teacher uses strategies to ensure that multiple students</p>	<p>Notes</p>						

respond to questions such as: response cards, response chaining, voting technologies)			I	A	D	B	NU
4. Using physical movement (e.g. the teacher uses strategies that require students to move physically such as: vote with your feet, physical reenactments of content)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
5. Maintaining a lively pace (e.g. the teacher slows and quickens the pace of instruction in such a way as to enhance engagement)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
6. Demonstrating intensity and enthusiasm (e.g. the teacher uses verbal and nonverbal signals that he or she is enthusiastic about the content)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
7. Using friendly controversy (e.g. the teacher uses techniques that require students to take and defend a position about content)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
8. Providing opportunities for students to talk about themselves (e.g. the teacher uses techniques that allow students to relate content to their personal lives and interests)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
9. Presenting unusual or intriguing information (e.g. the teacher provides or encourages the identification of intriguing information about the content)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
Design Question #7: What will I do to recognize and acknowledge adherence or lack of adherence to rules and procedures?							
10. Demonstrating “withitness’ (e.g. the teacher is aware of variations in student behavior that might indicate potential disruptions and attends to them immediately)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
11. Applying consequences (e.g. the teacher applies consequences to lack of adherence to rules and procedures consistently and fairly)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU
12. Acknowledging adherence to rules and procedures (e.g. the teacher acknowledges adherence to rules and procedures consistently and fairly)	Notes						
			I	A	D	B	NU

Design Question #8: What will I do to establish and maintain effective relationships with students?					
13. Understanding students' interests and backgrounds (e.g. the teacher seeks out knowledge about students and uses that knowledge to engage in informal, friendly discussions with students)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
14. Using behaviors that indicate affection for students (e.g. the teacher uses humor and friendly banter appropriately with students)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
15. Displaying objectivity and control (e.g. the teacher behaves in ways that indicate he or she does not take infractions personally)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
Design Question #9: What will I do to communicate high expectations for all students?					
16. Demonstrating value and respect for low expectancy students (e.g. the teacher demonstrates the same positive affective tone with low expectancy students as with high expectancy students)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
17. Asking questions of low expectancy students (e.g. the teacher asks questions of low expectancy students with the same frequency and level of difficulty as with high expectancy students)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B
18. Probing incorrect answers with low expectancy students (e.g. the teacher inquires into incorrect answers with low expectancy students with the same depth and rigor as with high expectancy students)	Notes				
		I	A	D	B