Observation Guidelines – Lenses for Observation
Department of Teacher Education
Cal State East Bay

These guidelines are for your use as you do the alternate placement observation. In addition to observing in a classroom, you need to enroll in TED 6999 in spring quarter 2018. You are expected to do 20 - 25 hours of observation prior to the spring class and 5 hours after (for a total of 25 hours). Using the lenses for observation outlined below, you will need to bring your notes with you to class. These notes will be used during the course meeting AND you will need to turn them in to receive a grade.

Observation Lenses

As you use these lenses for observation reflect on your own teaching practice. What can you learn from the teacher that you have observed? What questions do you have for them on how they succeeded in these areas? As you consider how to implement your learning into your classroom select one item at a time to work on. Some of the lenses are based on Lemov’s *Teach like a champion*, which you should have in your professional library. We recommend referring back to Lemov as you do the observations.

Make notes after each observation. Categorizing notes in each of these eight areas. Be prepared to bring your notes to share with others.

**Lens 1: Consider the Learning Climate**

The **learning climate** of a classroom refers to its physical and emotional environment. Some of the most important observable features of the learning environment are (a) the warmth, concerns, and expectations conveyed to students by the teacher, (b) the organization of the physical aspects of the classroom, and (c) the competitiveness, cooperation, or independence encouraged by the structure of activity within the classroom that can promote or preclude cohesion and interaction among students.

As you complete your observation, create a Venn diagram showing how the classroom you are observing is the same/different from your classroom. For example:

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Students sit in rows  
Equity Sticks  
Students sit in table groups
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After your observation, write a paragraph explaining what changes you want to make if any. What have you done in your classroom to create a positive learning climate?

**Lens 2: Focus on Classroom Management (Lemov)**

Classroom management involves how teachers organize the classroom and anticipate and respond to student behavior to provide an environment for efficient learning. Having and maintaining high
behavioral expectations underlies successful learning in any classroom. In your observations, do the students respond with 100% compliance? When giving instructions and directions to student are the directions specific, concrete, sequential, and observable? Does the teacher practice the five principles of strong voice: economy of language, do not talk over, do not engage, square up/stand still, and quiet power? Is the classroom management proactive or re-active? Are the consequences predictable and consistent?

Create a list of techniques that you observe related to classroom management. Identify one or two you will use in your class in the next week or two. After using the technique, write a paragraph or two explaining how it worked. (Remember that consistency is the key to success so you might give the new technique a little time before deciding whether or not it will be effective in your classroom)

Lens 3: Look for Lesson Clarity

Lesson clarity refers to a teacher's ability to speak clearly and directly and to organize and structure content at the students' current level of understanding. Some observable approaches to lesson clarity include informing learners of expected skills and understandings before a lesson; providing advance organizers that place the lesson content in the perspective of past and future learning; using examples, illustrations, demonstrations, and instructional media that can expand and clarify lesson content; and reviewing and summarizing during and at the close of a lesson.

Use bullet notes to fill out the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How are students informed of expected skills/understandings before the lesson?</th>
<th>How does the teacher provide context for the lesson? (Considering past and future learning)</th>
<th>What examples, illustrations, demonstrations or instructional media is used to expand or clarify the content?</th>
<th>How does the teacher review and summarize learning at the close of the lesson?</th>
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Lens 4: Observe Task Orientation

Task orientation involves effective teaching practices that help the teacher maintain an instructional focus, such as methods of managing classroom activities efficiently, ways of handling misbehavior with minimal disruption to the class, reducing instructional time devoted to clerical duties, and maximizing time devoted to content coverage. Methods of task orientation can be observed in lesson plans that reflect the text and follow state standards, rules and procedures that anticipate and thereby reduce misbehavior, and established milestones e.g., tests, reviews, and assignments) for maintaining instructional momentum.
How does the teacher maintain instructional momentum in the classroom? Give at least three examples in which the teacher efficiently manages activities and transitions, maximizes time for instruction, and uses established rules and procedures to reduce misbehavior. Explain how this might change your own instructional practice.

**Lens 5: Engagement**

How does the teacher engage all students in the learning process? Are techniques such as cold call used? When the teacher is engaging a student does the teacher scaffold the learning in the series of questions?

Make a list of all of the engagement techniques you see modeled in the lesson plan.

**Lens 6: Look for Higher Thought Processes and Performance Outcomes**

Higher thought processes are critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving behaviors that alone cannot be measured by tests of cognitive achievement. Some observable features of teaching for higher thought processes include using collaborative and group activities, demonstrating for students' mental models and strategies for learning, arranging for student projects and demonstrations, engaging students in oral performance, providing opportunities for independent practice and problem solving, and using performance assessments and student portfolios.

What opportunities are given for students to think critically, reason, and problem solve during the lesson? Write a paragraph summarizing what higher level thinking is happening in this particular classroom. What changes if any would you make to ensure you are challenging students?

**Lens 7: Assessment**

What type of assessment did you observe? Was it formative/summative/informal or formal? Did ALL of the students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning? If so, how was this accomplished?

Reflect on how you assess student learning? What other methods might you use in the future?

**Lens 8: Look for differentiation**

In observing another classroom, ask yourself if the structure of the lesson is appropriate to the learning objective. You have been exposed to several different lesson formats, such as a five-step lesson plan, I/we/you, etc. Is the lesson plan format appropriate to the learning and to the content area? Is the lesson plan appropriately scaffolded for all learners? Is there differentiation in the lesson plan?

Watch two different students in the classroom. How are you able to determine whether they have access the lesson? Describe what you see. If possible, follow up with the teacher afterward.

AND A FINAL QUESTION –

What did you learn by observing students in a different grade?