

**Classroom Observation Instrument for
Educational Environments Serving Students with Deaf-Blindness**

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This project (grant number H326T010001) is supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the position of the U.S. Department of Education.

Classroom Observation Instrument for Educational Environments Serving Students with Deaf-Blindness

The *Classroom Observation Instrument for Educational Environments Serving Students with Deaf-Blindness* is designed to help identify model classrooms serving students with severe and profound disabilities including those with deaf-blindness. The *COI* is comprised of three main components: (1) teacher interview; (2) student cumulative folder review; and, (3) observation rubric. The teacher interview section consists of questions involving the student's strengths and challenges, how these are used in instructional programming, inclusion in the general education curriculum, interaction with peers, and the teacher's main goals for the student. The folder review is conducted with the teacher to identify any standardized and/or functional assessments (e.g., vision, hearing, cognitive.), how these are used in instructional programming, and to review the student's stated IEP goals. The observation rubric consists of six sections targeting curriculum, data-based assessment, preservation of dignity, communication, social interactions and assistive technology. The rubric provides brief descriptors for each item along a four point Likert scale that yields a rating of achieved, nearly achieved, making progress or non-existent. A final section, while optional, allows the observer to note any special circumstances or additional information that should be noted about the classroom. A scoring guide is provided so that each individual section can be assessed as well as the total instrument. The protocol for administration is to conduct the teacher interview and folder review prior to the classroom observation. In most circumstances, administration of all components of the instrument takes approximately two hours.

A standard instrument validation design has been used to develop the *COI*. Individuals involved in the validation have come from constituencies who would be likely users of the instrument. This has included researchers in the fields of severe and profound disabilities and those in deaf-blindness, teacher education faculty, general education teachers, special education teachers, families of students who are deaf-blind, and technical assistance providers in the field of deaf-blind services. The instrument's development included the following protocols: (1) review of four standards-based documents (CEC's *Knowledge and Skill Base for All Beginning Special Education Teachers of Students in Individualized General Curriculums*; CEC's *Knowledge and Skill Base for All Beginning Special Education Teachers of Students in Individualized Independence Curriculums*; Perkins' *Competencies for Teachers of Learners who are Deaf-Blind*; and *Rhode Island Services of Students with Dual Sensory Impairments Instrument*) to assist the focus groups with idea generation; (2) idea generation through multiple stakeholder focus groups; (3) ranking of the importance of the instrument items using the nominal group technique (NGT) with a panel of experts in the field of deaf-blindness; (4) alignment of the items with various iterations of field testing with experts in the fields of severe and profound disabilities and deaf-blindness; and (5) multiple field-tests with technical assistance providers. These protocols have resulted in an instrument with strong content and construct validity. Inter-rater reliability with the final version of the instrument was .95.

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PROTOCOL

This instrument is for use in classrooms serving students who are deaf-blind. It consists of two main components: (1) teacher interview, and (2) classroom observation. Administration of both components of the instrument will take approximately 2 – 3 hours. The teacher interview should be conducted before the classroom observation. It is recommended that both sections be administered on the same day, although they may be conducted on separate days. If there is more than one child with deaf-blindness in the classroom, either select one child or complete a separate instrument for each child.

Section 1

If possible, request that the teacher have the child's cumulative folder to refer to during the interview. The goal of this section is to obtain general information about the classroom and the teacher's professional goals and understandings about the child. It is appropriate to probe with follow-up questions as necessary.

Section 2

This section is designed to review specific information about the child that will generally be contained in the cumulative folder. Encourage the teacher to review the cumulative folder if necessary.

Section 3a

This section may be completed while observing in the classroom or immediately after the observation. Select a consistent marking system such as circling, marking through, or highlighting the rating scale for each item. The major components of this section include curriculum, data-based assessment, preservation of dignity, communication, and social. Each component has a section for recording additional observations.

Section 3b

The Assistive Technology section is designed to determine how AT is being used in the classroom and how it is being used to serve the child.

Section 4

In this section, record overall observations about this classroom that need to be emphasized or that were not adequately captured in the rest of the instrument.

Scoring

A scoring guide is provided at the end of the instrument.

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Section 1: Interview with Teacher (General Ed and Special Ed if inclusive setting)

Classroom teacher(s): _____ School: _____

Observer: _____ Date: _____ Age of targeted student: _____

Total # of students: _____ Age range of students: _____ Number of students who are deaf-blind: _____ Number of assistants: _____

What other service providers are involved in this classroom? _____

Type of classroom (check one): Inclusive Resource room Self-contained Other (please describe: _____)

This classroom serves students with (check *all* that apply):

Physical impairments Cognitive impairments Behavioral Disorders Sensory Impairments

What are your main goals for this student?

1)

2)

3)

How is the student's family involved in his/her educational program?

How does the family communicate the student's educational needs?

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| | |
|---|---|
| What are the student's strengths and weaknesses? | |
| What are the student's STRENGTHS? (1): _____ (2): _____ (3): _____ (4): _____ (5): _____ How have you used the student's strengths in planning for his/her educational program? | What are the student's WEAKNESSES? (1): _____ (2): _____ (3): _____ (4): _____ (5): _____ How have you used the student's weaknesses in planning for his/her educational program? |
| In what ways is the student included in the general education curriculum? | |
| In what ways does the student interact with same age peers? | |

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Section 2: Interview with teacher and/or review of student's folder. (Review of folder is optional, but strongly encouraged.)

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Briefly list the student's main IEP goals below (may attach IEP)</p> <p>1)</p> <p>2)</p> <p>3)</p> <p>4)</p> <p>5)</p> <p>6)</p> | <p>What current educational assessments have been used to evaluate the student in the following areas?</p> <p>Cognitive abilities (e.g., KABC, KBIT, Stanford-Binet, Woodcock-Johnson, WISC, Slosson):</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Adaptive skills (e.g., BRIGANCE, HELP, Vineland, AAMR Adaptive Behavior Scale):</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>Sensory & Motor Abilities (e.g., vision tests, hearing tests, Peabody Developmental Motor Scales, observation):</p> <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> <p>How have these been used for program planning?</p> |
| <p>What corrective measures are required for vision (e.g., glasses)?</p> | <p>What corrective measures are required for hearing (e.g., FM system)?</p> |
| <p>What curricular and instructional modifications are you using to accommodate the student's functional vision?</p> | <p>What curricular and instructional modifications are you using to accommodate the student's functional hearing?</p> |

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Section 3a: Classroom Observations

| CURRICULUM | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (1) The daily schedule is posted and the student is <i>frequently</i> engaged in anticipatory planning. | The daily schedule is posted and the student is <i>infrequently</i> engaged in anticipatory planning. | The schedule is posted, but the student is <i>not involved</i> in anticipatory planning. | There is no schedule posted. | |
| (2) The student spends <i>most</i> of his/her time engaged in active learning activities , with "down-time" individualized to the student. | The student spends <i>some</i> of his/her time engaged in active learning activities , with some "down-time" time individualized to the student. | The student spends specific time engaged in active learning activities , but classroom demands result in extended "down-time." | Classroom demands result in reduced activities of active learning and considerable time spent in passive activity. | |
| (3) The student is <i>frequently</i> engaged in varied activities related to IEP goals. | The student is <i>sometimes</i> engaged in varied activities related to IEP goals. | The student is <i>rarely</i> engaged in varied activities related to IEP goals. | The student is <i>not</i> engaged in varied activities related to IEP goals. | |
| (4) The student receives systematic instruction in which activities are broken down into functional steps across <i>all</i> instructional areas and daily routines. | The student receives systematic instruction across <i>most</i> instructional areas and daily routines. | The student receives systematic instruction across <i>some</i> instructional areas and/or daily routines. | The student receives <i>no systematic instruction</i> in any instructional areas or daily routines. | |
| (5) The student's instructional programming demonstrates <i>ongoing</i> student involvement in orientation and mobility (e.g., establishing a destination, recognizing a route, use of calendar conversation, time to explore route). | The student's instructional programming demonstrates <i>some</i> strategies and approaches that teach orientation and mobility techniques that <i>are meaningful</i> to the student. | The student is provided <i>some</i> involvement in their orientation and mobility. Student involvement in orientation and mobility is <i>not always meaningful</i> to the student. | The student is provided no opportunity for involvement in their movement and orientation . | |
| (6) Teacher <i>clearly manages</i> the learning environment and <i>provides order</i> to the classroom. | Teacher <i>manages</i> the learning environment and <i>provides some order</i> to the classroom. | Teacher manages the learning environment, but the classroom is <i>disorderly</i> . | The classroom is <i>chaotic</i> and <i>disorderly</i> . | |
| (7) The student's IEP goals are <i>clearly</i> and <i>frequently</i> targeted within the learning activities. | The student's IEP goals are <i>sometimes</i> targeted within the learning activities. | The student's IEP goals are <i>infrequently</i> targeted within the learning activities. | The student's IEP goals are <i>not</i> targeted within the learning activities. | |
| (8) The student participates in independent work, 1:1, small group, and large group settings throughout the school day. | The student participates in <i>some</i> of the following instructional settings during the school day: independent work, 1:1, small group, large group. | The student participates primarily in <i>one</i> of the following settings: independent work, small group, large group, 1:1. | The student participates in <i>large group settings only</i> based on class demands rather than individual student educational needs. | |

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|-----------------------|
| Comments (Curriculum) |
|-----------------------|

| DATA-BASED ASSESSMENT | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (9) The student's instructional program demonstrates ongoing use of a data system that measures student progress on IEP objectives. Data are collected on a regular and consistent basis. | The student's instructional program demonstrates some use of a data system that measures student progress on IEP objectives. Data are collected occasionally. | The student's instructional program demonstrates little use of a data system that measures student progress on IEP objectives. Data are collected on a sporadic basis. | Data collection is <i>not evidenced</i> . | |
| (10) Data are reviewed frequently to make programmatic and instructional changes to meet the student's needs. | Data are reviewed <i>sometimes</i> to make programmatic and instructional changes to meet the student's needs. | Data are reviewed <i>rarely</i> to make programmatic and instructional changes to meet the student's needs. | Instructional changes occur <i>without</i> any analysis of data . | |
| Comments (Data-based Assessment) | | | | |

| PRESERVATION OF DIGNITY | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (11) All staff talk with students in an age-appropriate and respectful manner. Student-first terminology is used. Issues discussed in the student's presence reflect student involvement. | <i>Most</i> staff talk with the student in an age-appropriate and respectful manner. <i>Most</i> issues discussed in the student's presence reflect student involvement. | Staff converse with the student in a respectful manner but often use <i>language or mannerisms</i> of a student <i>much younger</i> . | Staff demonstrate interactions that <i>are not age appropriate</i> or respectful of student's dignity. | |
| (12) All care-giving and personal management routines are carried out in an age-appropriate way that is respectful of student dignity. | <i>Most</i> care-giving and personal management routines are carried out in an age-appropriate way that is respectful of student dignity. | Care-giving and personal management routines are provided to the student. The environment, procedures, or staff <i>do not always support</i> student dignity. | Care-giving and personal management routines are provided to the student with <i>limited support</i> for student dignity. | |
| (13) The student is provided appropriate opportunities for self-determination and choice making <i>throughout the day</i> . | The student is provided appropriate opportunities for self-determination and choice making <i>at proscribed times during the day</i> . | The student is provided appropriate opportunities for self-determination and choice making <i>once a day</i> . | The student is provided <i>no</i> opportunities for self-determination and choice making <i>during the day</i> . | |

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| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
|--|---|---|---|----------------|
| (14) The student is provided with <i>frequent</i> opportunities for partial participation across learning activities and the learning environment. | The student is provided with <i>some</i> opportunities for partial participation across learning activities and the learning environment. | The student is provided with <i>infrequent</i> opportunities for partial participation across learning activities and the learning environment. | The student is provided with <i>no</i> opportunities for partial participation across learning activities and the learning environment. | |
| Comments (Preservation of Dignity) | | | | |

| COMMUNICATION | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|----------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (15) All receptive communication cues are based upon the expectation of student response (e.g., type, wait time, expectation). | <i>Some</i> receptive communication cues are based upon the expectation of student response (e.g., type, wait time, expectation). | <i>Few</i> receptive communication cues are based upon the expectation of student response (e.g., type, wait time, expectation). | <i>No</i> receptive communication cues are based upon the expectation of student response (e.g., type, wait time, expectation). | |
| (16) Receptive Communication: The communication system provides the student with <i>frequent</i> opportunities to receive varied functions of communication (i.e., not just directives) on an <i>ongoing</i> basis. | The communication system provides the student with <i>some</i> opportunities to receive varied functions of communication (i.e., not just directives) on an <i>ongoing</i> basis. | The communication system provides the student <i>few</i> opportunities to receive varied functions of communication (i.e., not just directives) on an <i>ongoing</i> basis. | The communication system provides the student <i>no</i> opportunities to receive varied functions of communication (i.e., not just directives) on an <i>ongoing</i> basis. | |
| (17) Access to Communication: Student has <i>frequent</i> opportunities to communicate in all environments. | Student has <i>some</i> opportunities to communicate in all environments. | Student has <i>few</i> opportunities to communicate in all environments. | Student has <i>no</i> opportunities to communicate in all environments. | |
| (18) Communication Functions: The learning environment <i>consistently reflects a balance and variety</i> of communication functions (e.g., access, request, label, offer, protest). | The learning environment <i>occasionally reflects a balance and variety</i> of communication functions (e.g., access, request, label, offer, protest). | The learning environment <i>attempts a balance and variety</i> of communication functions (e.g., access, request, label, offer, protest), but is heavily dependent on using one or two functions. | The learning environment <i>does not reflect nor attempt a balance and variety</i> of communication functions (e.g., access, request, label, offer, protest). | |

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| COMMUNICATION | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|----------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (19) Expressive Communication: The communication system and learning environment provide the student with expressive ways to appropriately interact with others <i>frequently</i> . | The communication system and learning environment provide the student with expressive ways to interact with others <i>sometimes</i> . | The communication system and learning environment provide the student with expressive ways to interact with others <i>rarely</i> . | The student is <i>not provided</i> opportunities to use expressive communication to interact with others. | |
| (20) Response time: The student is provided adequate time to process information and respond in <i>all</i> communication. | The student is provided adequate time to process information and respond in <i>most</i> communication. | The student is <i>rarely</i> provided adequate time to process information and respond in communication. Communication is often overlooked due to its delay. | The student is <i>not provided</i> adequate time to process information and respond . <i>Student is expected to respond quickly</i> . Many communications are overlooked or rushed. | |
| (21) A student's behavior is considered communication . Staff attempt to teach appropriate means to communicate, and redirect and support the student before and during a crisis. | A student's behavior is considered communication. Staff show <i>some</i> attempt to teach appropriate means to communicate, and redirect and support the student during a crisis. | A student's behavior is considered communication. Staff attempts to change the behavior without considering the student's perspective. Redirection occurs primarily during a crisis. | Behavior is not considered communication. | |
| (22) Communication Partners: Key individuals in the environment (teachers, staff, peers) <i>use the student's various modes of communication in both instruction and interaction</i> . | <i>Most key individuals</i> in the environment (teachers, staff, peers) <i>use the student's various modes of communication for both instruction and interaction</i> . | <i>Few key individuals</i> in the environment (teachers, staff, peers) <i>use the student's various modes of communication for both instruction and interaction</i> . | <i>Most key individuals</i> in the environment (teachers, staff, peers) do not use the student's various modes of communication for both instruction and interaction . | |
| Comments (Communication) | | | | |

| SOCIAL | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|----------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (23) The student is taught communication and social skills necessary to interact with peers and make friends. | The student is taught some social skills and is given some opportunities to use these skills with peers. | The student is taught some social skills but is not given opportunities to use these skills with peers. | The student is not taught social skills. | |

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| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
|---|--|---|--|----------------|
| (24) The student's program reflects the general education curriculum . Although different, the student is provided this curriculum in a way that is <i>useful and understandable</i> to the student. | The student's program reflects some access to the general education curriculum . Although different, student is provided this curriculum in a way that is <i>somewhat</i> useful and understandable to the student. | The student's program reflects <i>minimal access</i> to the general education curriculum . The general curriculum is provided in a generic way that is often <i>not relevant to/ not understood</i> by the student. | The student's program is <i>separate</i> from the general education curriculum . | |
| (25) There are a <i>variety</i> of opportunities for the student to interact with peers including small/large group instruction, non-instructional free-time, and extracurricular activities. | There are <i>some</i> opportunities for the student to interact with peers including small/large group instruction, non-instructional free-time, and extracurricular activities. | The daily schedule reflects <i>some</i> opportunities for the student to interact with peers in <i>one activity</i> such as small/large group instruction, non-instructional free-time, or extracurricular activities. | The daily schedule reflects <i>no</i> opportunity for the student to interact with peers. | |
| Comments (Social) | | | | |

Section 3b: Classroom observation focusing on assistive technology (AT)

| ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY |
|--|
| <p>What types of assistive technology are available in this classroom?</p> |
| <p>What types of assistive technology are actively used by the student in this classroom?</p> |

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For questions 26 - 30, place a check mark in the *second* column if that AT need is mentioned in the student's IEP. For those AT needs checked, indicate the most appropriate description for this classroom.

| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Achieved | Making progress | Not achieved | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Place a check mark for AT needs noted in students IEP | | (26) Vision AT is used to maintain and improve the student's functional vision and is <i>appropriately</i> used throughout the day. | AT is used to maintain and improve the student's functional vision but is <i>inconsistently</i> used. | AT is available to maintain and improve the student's functional vision but is <i>not used</i> . | AT is not available and is not used. | |
| | | (27) Hearing AT is used to maintain and improve the student's functional hearing and is <i>appropriately</i> used throughout the day. | AT is used to maintain and improve the student's functional hearing but is <i>inconsistently</i> used. | AT is available to maintain and improve the student's functional hearing, but is <i>not used</i> . | AT is not available and is not used. | |
| | | (28) Communication AT is used to maintain and improve a student's <i>communication skills</i> , and is <i>appropriately</i> used throughout the day. | AT is used to maintain and improve a student's <i>communication skills</i> but is <i>inconsistently</i> used. | AT is available to maintain and improve a student's <i>communication skills</i> , but is <i>not used</i> . | AT is not available and is not used. | |
| | | (29) Behavior AT is used to maintain and improve a student's ability to self-manage their behavior, and is <i>appropriately</i> used throughout the day. | AT is used to maintain and improve a student's ability to self-manage their behavior but is <i>inconsistently</i> used. | AT is available to maintain and improve a student's ability to self-manage behavior, but is <i>not used</i> . | AT is not available and is not used. | |
| | | (30) Daily life skills AT is used to maintain and improve a student's <i>daily life skills</i> , and is <i>appropriately</i> used throughout the day. | AT is used to maintain and improve a student's <i>daily life skills</i> but is <i>inconsistently</i> used. | AT is available to maintain and improve a student's <i>daily life skills</i> , but is <i>not used</i> . | AT is not available and is not used. | |

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| ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (continued) | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|-----------------------|
| Achieved | Nearly Achieved | Making Progress | Non-existent | Not Applicable |
| (31) <i>All</i> AT devices are selected to align with the student's IEP goals. | <i>Most</i> AT devices are selected to align with the student's IEP goals. | <i>Some</i> AT devices are selected to align with the student's IEP goals. | There is <i>no</i> connection between the AT devices selected and the IEP goals. | |
| (32) Instructional and assistive technology are incorporated into <i>all</i> aspects of the student's educational program as appropriate. | Instructional and assistive technology are incorporated into <i>most</i> aspects of the student's educational program as appropriate. | Instructional and assistive technology are incorporated into <i>some</i> aspects of the educational program as appropriate. | Instructional and assistive technology are <i>not</i> incorporated into the student's educational program. | |
| Comments (Assistive Technology) | | | | |

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Part 4: Overall impressions

What were areas of strength within this classroom?

What areas need improvement within this classroom?

What were your overall impressions of this classroom for serving the needs of students who are deaf-blind?

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SCORING GUIDE

Total the number of points for each section using the following guide:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Achieved | = | 3 |
| Nearly achieved | = | 2 |
| Making progress | = | 1 |
| Non-existent | = | 0 |

Record this information in the TOTAL POINTS column.

Count the number of items that were included within each section. Any items that were scored **non-applicable** should not be counted within the total number of questions for that section. Record this information in the total items column.

Divide the total points by the total items to obtain the mean for each section. Record this information in the mean column.

| SECTION | Total points | Total items | Mean (total points/total items) |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Curriculum | | | |
| Data-based | | | |
| Dignity | | | |
| Communication | | | |
| Social | | | |
| AT | | | |
| Overall total | | | |