

TOOLS FOR

MAKING IT
REALPre-Scoring Video to Clarify
Expectations for Effective TeachingDCPS Guidelines
for Score
Rationales

These guidelines demonstrate one way to draft quality rationales when pre-scoring video of teaching with a rubric.

Effective observer training requires pre-scored video for which the correct ratings are clearly explained. Expert observers (or “master coders”) who review each segment must produce score justifications that call out the right evidence for the right rating, based on the rubric. This helps observers in training understand what a rubric’s indicators of performance look like in practice, and it lets them compare their own attempts to identify relevant evidence with the correct evidence for rating a segment.

To support the work of producing quality rationales, District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) provides these guidelines to master coders (called “anchor raters” in DCPS) and others involved in pre-scoring video in the district. Created by Leah Levine, a former member of the district’s evaluator support team, the document includes criteria for language use, organization, specificity, and references to the DCPS observation rubric’s teaching components (called Teach standards) and indicators of performance (called rows). Also provided are examples of rationales that do and do not meet the criteria.



This is one in a set of tools cited in the MET project practice guide *Making It Real: Pre-Scoring Video to Clarify Expectations for Effective Teaching*. Publications under the banner of *Building Trust in Observations* offer practical advice to states, districts, and technical assistance providers on how to build and improve a trustworthy observation system. All MET project resources are at: www.metproject.org.

Rationale: The goal of anchor rating is to set the gold standard for teacher observation. Videos scored through this project support consistent scoring expectations across the district. Strong evidence is the most effective way to provide insight into a rater rationale and to ensure practices are replicated across DCPS.

Audience-ready evidence criteria includes:

<p>Professional Writing</p>	<p>Ensure there are no mechanical errors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Word template has been provided for your convenience.
<p>Consistent Language</p>	<p>Submit evidence in the third person, past tense.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teach 9, Row 4, Level 2:</i> The teacher sometimes reinforced positive behavior and good academic work. For example, during the summary portion of the lesson the teacher paused to say, "You guys are doing awesome." However, she did not always provide meaningful, specific praise.
<p>Rubric Language</p>	<p>Begin your evidence with the language of the rubric level that best describes the evidence. <i>Teach 6, Row 3, Level 3:</i> The teacher almost always probed students' correct responses to ensure student understanding. For example...</p>
<p>Row-by-Row Scores and Organization</p>	<p>You can organize evidence by short paragraphs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teach 5, Row 1:</i> The teacher checked for understanding at some key moments. For example, she called on students to share their responses to the "Do Now." She also checked for understanding during the group activity. However, she missed a key moment when she did not check for understanding of the group work directions releasing students. Although she said, "Any questions?" this was not an effective check. (2) <p>You can also organize evidence through a bulleted list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teach 5, Row 1, Level 2:</i> The teacher checked at some key moments by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calling on students during the "Do Now," ○ Questioning during the activity • She missed the following key moment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After giving directions: "Any questions?" was an ineffective check.
<p>Context-Specific Evidence</p>	<p>Include student/teacher quotes and names when appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher asked many questions such as, "Who can use some of our vocabulary to tell me if the experiment was fair or unfair?" • At various points in the lesson, students asked questions that demonstrated movement towards higher-level understanding. For example, Olivia asked, "Are 'parallel' and 'perpendicular' opposites?" <p>Note locations and time-stamps when appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students at the left table passed notes and threw paper while the teacher was addressing the group at the front of the class. • The transition to small groups took almost 7 minutes. The teacher released students to small groups at 13:20. Students did not begin work until 20:13.

Examples of evidence that meet the criteria:

Example 1: Teach 4, Level 1

Row 1 (Level 1): The teacher provided multiple ways to engage with the content, but most ways did not move students towards mastery. The teacher engaged students in the following ways:

- Interpersonal - Students worked in partners with a dictionary to investigate the multiple meanings of a word. However, this way was not effective because students were not supported on how to effectively use context clues.
- Kinesthetic - Students were given special words and asked to line up by which word they were given. However, most students were not given the opportunity to engage in the content in this way.
- Visual ways - The teacher projected the assignment on her Smart board. However the visuals did not support student understanding about how to use context clues in order to select the correct multiple meaning word.
- Auditory - The teacher offered explanations of the content to students. However, her explanations were not high quality (see Teach 2) and therefore did not move students towards mastery.

Row 2 (Level 2): The teacher included learning styles appropriate to the students, and most students responded positively. Not all were actively engaged, however. For example, two students were observed whispering to each other throughout the lesson and one student had his head in his hands for the majority of the lesson. While some students were able to participate in the kinesthetic line-up activity, most remained at their desks and were not observed participating in the lesson.

Example 2: Teach 2, Level 2

- (Row 1 - 2) Explanations were generally clear with a few exceptions. For example, although her demonstrations were effective, the teacher did not clearly explain the difference between sipping and gulping and how that related to walking and sprinting.
- (Row 2 - 2) The teacher used broad vocabulary like analogy, but her statement that “skillfully” and “gracefully” were “pretty much the same” was not entirely precise.
- (Row 3 - 2) She sometimes emphasized key points by demonstrating the act of sprinting to show the relationship to gulping. However, she did not explain how the word pairs related to one another.
- (Row 4 - 3) Students showed that they understood the explanations by nodding their heads and repeating her explanations.
- (Row 5 - 3) The teacher made connections to students’ prior knowledge by using track as an example and stating, “You all remember, I’m going to be in the Olympics.”

Examples of evidence that do not meet the criteria:

Example 1: Teach 8, Level 3

The teacher was effective at maximizing instruction. Routines and procedures ran smoothly with minimal prompting from the teacher. Students were engaged and on task. Inappropriate or off-task behavior did not delay instruction.

Explanation: While this evidence includes rubric language that is organized by row and is written in the third person, past tense, it does not provide specific examples from the lesson that would allow the audience to understand why this teacher was effective at maximizing instruction.

Example 2: Teach 9, Level 2

- Students are generally engaged in their work but not highly invested in it
- Safe environment for students to take on academic risks
- Students are generally respectful of the teacher but need reminders to respect peers
- Sometimes reinforces positive behavior
- Positive rapport; no evidence of negative rapport

Explanation: This evidence includes rubric language and is organized by row. It does not include row scores, provide specific examples, and it is not written in third person, past tense.