

OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

Adapted for Virtual Activities (OST-A)¹

Co-observed? Yes / No

COVER SHEET

Program ID/Location, or on-line platform utilized:	Observer Initials: 1. _____ 2. _____	Observation Number:	Room Number (if applicable):	Date:	Start Time:	End Time:
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ACTIVITY NAME:

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

(1-2 sentence description):

ACTIVITY TYPE	✓ ata*	TYPE OF SPACE	✓ one	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	#					
Homework Help/Test Prep		Classroom		Total number of girls						
Tutoring		On-line, one-on-one On-line, multiple participants		Total number of boys						
Academic activities (not homework)		Gym		GRADE LEVELS (circle all that apply)						
Story reading/listening		Computer Lab								
Visual arts		Library		K	1	2	3	4	5	6
Dance		Cafeteria		7	8	9	10	11	12	other
Music		Auditorium		PARTICIPATION TYPE						✓ one
Drama		Art Room		By age or grade						
Crafts		Music Room		Assigned (e.g. by child's needs)						
Sports—practicing/learning a skill		Hallway		By interest (child's choice)						
Sports—playing competitive or non-competitive physical games		Outside Playground		All attendees (in the program)						
Open, unstructured time (e.g., table games, Internet, free play)		Other:		TOTAL STAFF						#
Staff-assigned learning games (dominos, chess, etc.)		PRESENCE OF STUDENTS	✓ ata*	High school student						
		In-person		College student or young adult						
		Virtual (on-line)								
		On streaming video								
Community service		PRESENCE OF STAFF/FACILITATORS (For activities with on-site participants)	✓ ata*	Certified teacher						
		In-person								
College/career preparation		On streaming video		Specialist or other professional						
Cultural awareness clubs/reflective groups		PRESENCE OF OBSERVERS (For activities with on-site participants)	✓ one	Other adult						
Character Education/Youth Leadership		In-person		Additional Unknown						
Social-Emotional Development		Virtually observed (e.g. via live video stream)		*ata = all that apply						
Other:										

At the end of the observation, please indicate what type of skill development, if any, took place in this activity.		PRIMARY SKILL TARGETED (check only if skill-building/practice checked)	✓ one
SKILL DEVELOPMENT	✓ one	Physical/athletic	
		Artistic	
This is a homework/ assigned independent work activity		Math/numeracy	
		Reading/writing/literacy	
Skill-building or skill practice/ reinforcement (if ✓ --> mark primary skill in next column)		Decision making/problem solving	
		Interpersonal communication	
Neither		Other (specify):	

¹ Source: Policy Studies Associates, www.PolicyStudies.com, 3rd Edition (2015); Adapted with permission by Measurement Incorporated www.mi-schoolservices.com, January 2021. Adaptions represented in blue.

OST INDICATOR ITEM RATINGS

Directions to Observers: After *at least* 15 minutes of observation (*or enough to accurately rate all indicators*), assign a rating of 1 (not evident) to 7 (highly evident and consistent), NA (not applicable), or UNK (unknown) to each item below. To select a rating *for indicators that can be rated*, identify the ODD NUMBER that most closely reflects how evident and pervasive an indicator is. If that number does not precisely reflect the level of evidence observed, then move down or up to the adjacent even number that more accurately reflects the item's presence within an activity. ~~Note that each indicator may not be present or applicable in each observation; therefore, a rating of "1" may be accurately descriptive and not necessarily negative.~~ The "5" rating is also used in cases where the indicator's presence is implicit within the activity. For instance, if youth are generally friendly to each other throughout the observation, but most do not go beyond a casual, friendly interaction, the rating would be a "5." If the congeniality is active, pervasive, and continuous, the rating would be a "7."

Note however that some of these ratings may not always be relevant to every observed activity. (For example, if students are expected to be working independently during the observed segment, ratings of youth efforts towards relationship building may not be relevant.) In such cases, these exemplars should *not* receive a low rating *unless its absence detracts from the quality of the activity*. Otherwise they should be rated as "not applicable".

In many situations – particularly in the case of virtual observations – there may also be cases where the observer is *unable to determine* whether, or the extent to which, a particular exemplar was evident. In such situations, that exemplar again should *not* receive a low rating, but should be marked as "unknown".

In summary, a low rating implies that the exemplar was known to be not evident or inconsistent, *and* its absence detracts from the quality of the activity. If observation scores are summarized (across activities, across groups, etc.), it is important that "not applicable" and "unknown" ratings should be treated as missing data, not included in the average.

RATINGS: Exemplar is...

1 ...not evident	2	3 ...rarely evident	4	5 ...evident or implicit	6	7 ...highly evident and consistent	NA Not Applicable	UNK Unknown
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YOUTH...	
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:	PARTICIPATION:
<p>Are friendly and relaxed with one another. Youth socialize informally. They are relaxed in their interactions with each other. They appear to enjoy one another's company. <i>In a virtual environment, this might be evidenced by how they talk to and/or "chat" with each other.</i></p>	<p>Are on-task. Youth are focused, attentive, and not easily distracted from the task/project. They follow along with the staff and/or follow directions to carry on an individual or group task. Noise level and youth interactions can be high if youth are engaged in the expected task(s).</p>
<p>Respect one another. Youth refrain from causing disruptions that interfere with others accomplishing their own tasks. When working together, they consider one another's viewpoints. They refrain from derogatory comments or actions about an individual person and the work s/he is doing; if disagreements occur, they are handled constructively. <i>Particularly in a virtual environment, they respect the need to avoid interrupting each other.</i></p>	<p>Listen actively and attentively to peers and staff. Youth listen and respond to each other and staff. They appear interested in what others have to say. <i>If in person, they look at peers and/or staff when they speak, and they provide concrete and constructive feedback about ideas or actions.</i></p>
<p>Show positive affect to staff. Youth interact with the staff, and these interactions are generally friendly interactions. For example, they may smile at staff, laugh with them, and/or share good-natured jokes.</p>	<p>Contribute opinions, ideas, and/or concerns to discussions. Youth discuss/express their ideas and respond to staff questions and/or spontaneously share connections they've made. This item goes beyond basic Q&A and refers to sharing as part of the activity and within the class norms. <i>Submitting questions or comments in a chat box may be an appropriate way to contribute, but only if staff have instructed students that this is an option and the chat is being monitored</i> Calling out - or disruptively talking out of turn - is not part of this item.</p>
<p>Assist one another. One or more youth formally or informally reach out to help/mentor peers and help them think about and figure out how to complete a task. This item refers to assistance that is intentional and prolonged, going beyond answering an incidental question. May include assisting one another with drama, dance, step, or sports techniques/moves. <i>This rating may not be applicable in a virtual learning environment.</i></p>	<p>Have opportunities to make meaningful choices. Within this activity, youth choose what they do, how they do it, and/or with whom they collaborate, and they experience the consequences of their choices. This item refers to genuine options about how to accomplish the task, not simple choices such as choosing between two types of games, or two sets of homework pages. <i>Note that choices about with whom to collaborate may not always be practical in a virtual environment (e.g. because break-out room may need to be assigned in advance, or randomly), but other opportunities for choice can be provided.</i></p>
<p>Are collaborative. Youth work together/share materials to accomplish tasks. Youth are equal partners in the work. This item includes strategizing how to complete a product and includes planning a cohesive product or performance (e.g., a dance, a play, or a musical event) or winning a game. This item is different from "Assist one another" (above) in that it involves a joint intellectual effort. <i>Collaboration is much more difficult in a virtual environment, but should still be a goal of the activity design where possible. If it is not practical for the observed activity, and the observer deems the value of the activity to be greater than the benefit of collaboration, this item can be rated as Not Applicable.</i></p>	<p>Take leadership responsibility/roles. Youth have meaningful responsibility for directing, mentoring or assisting one another to achieve an outcome; they lead some part of the activity by organizing a task or a whole activity, or by leading a group of youth within the activity.</p>

STAFF...	
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:
<p>Use positive behavior management techniques that allow youth to accomplish the activity's objectives. Staff set consistent limits and clear behavioral standards, and these are appropriate to the age of the youth and the activity type, including consideration of specific standards required for virtual environments. If it is necessary to discipline, staff do so in a firm and consistent manner that holds students accountable without accusations, threats, or anger, and there is no evidence of disciplinary problems.</p>	<p>Communicate goals, purpose, expectations. Staff make clear the purpose of what youth are doing and/or what they expect them to accomplish. Activity goals/expectations may also be implicit if youth are clearly on task without staff direction. This item goes beyond how youth are expected to behave (which would be captured under "Use positive behavior management techniques").</p>
<p>Encourage the participation of all. Regardless of gender, race, language ability, or other evident differences among youth, staff try to engage youth who appear isolated, and/or struggle more than others with technology; they do not favor (or ignore) a particular youth or small cluster of youth.</p>	<p>Verbally recognize youth's efforts and accomplishments. Staff explicitly acknowledge youth's participation and progress to motivate them using praise, encouragement, and/or constructive guidance/modeling. (Must involve verbal statements not just implied affirmation.)</p>
<p>Show positive affect toward youth. Staff tone is caring and friendly; they use positive language, smile, laugh, or share good-natured jokes. They refrain from threats, cutting sarcasm, or harsh criticism. If no verbal interaction is necessary, staff demonstrate a positive and caring affect toward youth.</p>	<p>Assist youth without taking control. Staff refrain from taking over a task or doing the work for the youth. They coach, demonstrate, or employ scaffolding techniques that help youth to gain a better understanding of a concept or complete an action on their own. This assistance goes beyond checking that work is completed. If none of the participants needed any assistance during the observation, this item may be rated as Not Applicable, but this situation would likely be rare (see Activity Content – "challenges youth" in next table).</p>
<p>Attentively listen to and/or observe youth. Staff look at youth or, in a virtual environment, at the camera, when they speak and acknowledge what they have said by responding and/or reacting verbally or nonverbally. This might include responding to comments or questions in the chat box. They pay attention to youth as they complete tasks and are interested in what youth are saying/doing.</p>	<p>Ask youth to expand upon their answers and ideas. Staff encourage youth to explain their answers, to give evidence, or suggest conclusions. They ask youth "why," "how," and "if" questions to get youth to expand, explore, better clarify, articulate, or concretize their thoughts/ideas. This item goes beyond basic Q&A.</p>
<p>Encourage youth to share their ideas, opinions, and concerns about the content of the activity. Staff actively elicit youth ideas, opinions, and concerns on the activity content through discussion and/or writing. This item goes beyond basic Q&A to fully engage with youth's ideas and thinking.</p>	<p>Challenge youth to move beyond their current level of competency. Staff give constructive feedback that is designed to motivate youth, to set a higher standard, and meant to help youth gauge their progress. Staff help youth determine ways to push themselves intellectually, creatively, and/or physically.</p>
<p>Engage personally with youth. Staff show a personal interest in youth as individuals, ask about their interests, and engage in discussion about events in their lives. This goes beyond content-based discussions to include personal interest and demonstrate caring by the adults.</p>	<p>Employ varied teaching strategies. To engage youth and/or reach those with different learning styles, staff use diverse instructional strategies, which may include: direct instruction, coaching, modeling, demonstrating, or others. Varied instructional strategies can occur simultaneously and/or sequentially within the observation period.</p>
<p>Guide positive peer interactions. The lesson structure/content explicitly encourages positive relationships/interactions and/or teaches interpersonal skills. In a virtual environment, skills that are specific to such an environment, such as allowing space for connection delays or technology glitches to avoid unintentionally cutting a speaker off, should also be considered. May involve staff explaining or through planned activity content why negative behavior (e.g., bullying, teasing, etc.) is unacceptable and offering constructive behavior alternatives. This item does not refer to "Use positive behavior management techniques" above.</p>	<p>Plan for/ask youth to work together. Staff structure activities so that youth work cooperatively to solve problems, and/or accomplish tasks. The focus of the activity is youth- to-youth, rather than youth-to-staff. This item goes beyond staff-assigned teams for competitive games and sports. In the case of staff-assigned teams, staff actively encourage youth to collaborate, plan, devise strategies, etc. While this is possible in a virtual environment, the inherent limitations to collaboration should be taken into consideration.</p>
ACTIVITY CONTENT AND STRUCTURE (Note: When homework is the observed activity, do not score these indicators.)	
<p>Is well organized. Activity has clear (implicitly or explicitly stated) goals/objectives; there is evidence of a clear lesson plan and process(es), and tasks can be conducted in the timeframe available. If special materials are needed, they are prepared and available.</p>	<p>Involves the practice/a progression of skills. Activity involves practicing skills needed to complete tasks. If a long-term project, youth's activity on the project provides the opportunity to apply or expand skills or techniques previously learned.</p>
<p>Challenges youth intellectually, creatively, developmentally, and/or physically. Activity's level of challenge is not so difficult that youth have trouble participating successfully and not so easy that youth complete tasks routinely, without thought, and become restless/disengaged.</p>	<p>Requires analytic thinking. Activity calls on youth to think about and solve meaningful problems and/or juggle multiple activities or strategies/dimensions to accomplish a task. For example, the activity requires youth to think about two or more ideas, and/or understand and apply sequencing or patterns. This can apply to complex dance, arts, theater, or sports moves, routines, or strategies.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Questions 1a – 1d relate to in-person activities that are observed via streaming video.

1a. Does the video cover the whole class (all students)?	Whole	Partial	No
If Partial or No, what is missing?			
1b. Are teachers and displays sufficiently visible?	Yes	No	
If No, why not?			
1c. Does the video movement improve observer’s understanding of the lesson?	Yes	Partial	No
If Partial or No, what is lacking?			
1d. Can observer see everything necessary to understand the lesson?	Yes	No	
If No, what is missing?			
The remaining questions should be completed for all types of observations.			
2. Are the level of adult supervision and/or virtual platform, functions and strategies used appropriate to activity and age group?	Yes	No	
If no: ^Why not?			
3. Are the work space and/or virtual platform, functions and strategies used conducive to the activity?	Yes	No	
If no: ^Why not?			
4. Are necessary materials available and in sufficient supply, or remotely viewable, legible and accessible?	Yes	No	
If no: ^Why not?			

OBSERVER'S SYNTHESIS

Please provide a brief summary of the activity and note how the activity demonstrates core features, where applicable:

ELEMENT	OBSERVER'S SYNTHESIS
Activity Summary: Please provide a brief description of the activity observed.	
Skill-Building: Activity builds progressively more sequenced and advanced skills and knowledge and challenges youth to achieve clear goals.	
Active Learning: Youth engage actively in learning. They lead/participate in discussions, develop or research a product, contribute original ideas, collaborate, take on leadership roles, and/or are oriented toward completing tasks.	
Relationship-Focused: Actively strengthens relationships among youth and between youth and staff.	
Task-Oriented: The activity engages youth in specific learning and/or developmental goals	