

## Queen's-Trent Concurrent Education Program

### MAKING STUDENT OBSERVATIONS

- Year 1** – 5 observations of 3 students, one of whom is a student with special needs or equivalent
- Year 2** – 5 observations of 3 students, one of whom is a student with special needs or equivalent
- Year 3** – 5 observations of 5 students, two of whom are students with special needs or equivalent

During your placement you need to arrange for some time to make detached, in-the-moment, observations of students, using an open narrative style. The purpose of this activity is to observe individual students in as objective a manner as possible, **without making any immediate judgments or interpretations**, providing data for later reflection, interpretation, and planning for how you can best facilitate learning for these students.

The ideal is to observe each student in a variety of different situations e.g. different times of the day; working alone, in groups, or during whole-class instruction; engaged in different subjects or different types of activities.

**Each period of observation can be brief, but should have your intense focus.** Do not try to make observations when you are engaged in teaching activities. It is important to schedule times for observations. **The observations must not be post-hoc recollections** – do not decide at the end of the day to try to remember what a student did and then write it down. That results in very selective observations, often representing negative situations.

For each observation you need to record the situation (time, location, activity, subject, and any other relevant information). Then you should record what the student says and does during the period of observation, noting times if that is relevant. **Your descriptions should be factual, not interpretive** e.g. “student yawns” not “student is bored”. Think of yourself as a camera! Include enough detail that the notes will be meaningful to you when you return to them later. You may choose to observe more than one student at a time. You can use whatever format for recording that works for you. You may wish to use a chart/table, or have a note card for each student, or a page in a binder for each student. A sample format is shown below.

DATE	SITUATION <i>(Describe the context)</i>	OBSERVED BEHAVIOUR <i>(What did the student say or do)</i>	INTERPRETATIONS <i>(Given what you have observed)</i>	PROGRAM PLAN <i>(Based on your interpretations)</i>
<b>STUDENT A</b> <b>AGE ____</b>	1 2 3 4 5			

Once you have completed a set of observations, then you can spend some time outside of class in making interpretations and developing a program plan. What have you learned about this student? Were there patterns of behaviour evident? What interpretations can you make from their actions and speech? The interpretations may be for specific incidences of behaviour, or may be overall interpretations. Based on your interpretations, what can you do as a teacher to help this student learn? Your program plan should be able to be used to help with the development of an Individual Education Plan.

For your PRAC assignment submission, please submit your original observation notes (do not recopy) along with a more formal summary for each student observed, including your interpretations and program plan.