

Civic Opportunities Observation Tool: Definitions

The following definitions, developed collaboratively by our research team, guide our observational codes and our narrative reflections.

Term	Definition	Example
Redirective response	With negative language, teacher directs student action in order to <u>stop</u> certain behaviors they want to <i>dissuade</i> .	“Stop talking, Tom” “Don’t bother your neighbor, Nimet”
Supportive response	With positive language, teacher directs student action in order to <u>reinforce</u> certain behaviors they want to <i>encourage</i> .	“Thank you, Rand, for taking out your pencil.”
Concrete Consequences/Rewards *Conflated as opposite side of the same coin.	An observable sanction or reward is bestowed to a student for a particular behavior.	Demerit; name on board; removal to hallway; points removed Merit; earned points
Peer Regulation: Redirective	Students control classroom operations by <i>expressing disapproval</i> of certain peer behaviors.	“Be quiet, so we can start the quiz!”
Praising Reaction, <i>teacher</i>	Spontaneously and without ulterior motive, teacher praises a student for their answer or work.	“That was very thoughtful, Jamal.”
Praising Reaction, <i>student</i>	Spontaneously and without ulterior motive, a student praises a peer for their answer or work.	“Snaps”
Question Content: Empirical	Attempting to elicit information derived from the class’ content and/or knowledge privileged within the curriculum.	“Who knows anything about...?” “Who remembers...?”
Question Content: Opinion	Attempting to elicit the students’ personal perspective and lived experience.	“How many of you have felt...?” “What is your opinion...?”
Question Type: Closed	A single answer is possible and expected.	“What is the answer?” Yes/No/Definition Answers
Question Type: Open-Ended	A range of answers is possible and permissible.	“Why did this occur...?” “What are the interpretations of...?”

Term	Definition	Example
Expected Response: Closed, <i>specific</i> answer	When posing a question, the teacher anticipates students will supply one, “right” answer.	Teacher: Why Vote? Student: to elect our representatives... perform constitutional duty...
Expected Response: Closed, <i>right kind</i> of answer	When posing a question, the teacher anticipates students will arrive at a particular answer and will potentially steer them toward that answer through questioning techniques or feedback.	Teacher: Why vote? Student: It doesn’t make a difference. Teacher: Why would you say that? In the 2000 election... Student: So I guess every vote counts and we should make our voices heard
Expected Response: Open-Ended, prescribed	When posing the question, the teacher is open to a <i>particular</i> response or perspective. The range of permissible answers is <i>limited</i> .	Teacher: How would we evaluate <i>Brown v. Board</i> today? Student: good....
Expected Response: Open-Ended, non-prescribed	When posing the question, the teacher is open to <i>multiple, different</i> responses or perspectives. The range of permissible answers is <i>potentially limitless</i> .	Teacher: How would we evaluate <i>Brown v. Board</i> today? Student: unfulfilled....