
Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®)

Environment G: Digital Learning

Why It Matters: Today's learners encounter digital devices from a very early age, essentially growing up with some form of technology in their hands (National Educational Technology Plan, 2004). As an ISTE white paper explains, "Future innovation in education and technology will continue to disrupt virtually every industry and enterprise, presenting challenges as well as unprecedented opportunities for economic growth and human development" (Barr & Sykora, 2015, p.4). Faced with such a future, high-quality classrooms must find innovative and authentic ways to integrate student use of technology in a way that fosters a positive and strong digital learning environment.

What to Understand

- This environment focuses on **student** use of digital tools.
- Student interaction is essential to ensure connection and collaboration with their peers and teacher(s).
- For example, the first 20 minutes are might be focused on introducing the lesson and the teacher's expectations. Therefore, students might not be engaged in critical thinking, collaborating with peers, or exploring topics that are relevant and interesting to them.
- Each Item Descriptor measures a different aspect of student use of digital tools and
 - G.1** - Basic information gathering
 - G.2** - More in-depth research, problem-solving and new learning
 - G.3** - Communication and collaboration assigned to groups, do not necessarily indicate they are collaborating.

What Learners Do

- Look up information needed to complete activities.
- Apply information and lesson content to new situations.
- Collect and synthesize information from a variety of sources to develop a deeper body of knowledge.
- Generate new content/materials.
- Work collaboratively to solve problems and complete tasks.
- Share learning objectives with others.

What Observers Do

- Listen for students' responses to questions and the format in which they respond: are their responses through discussions, demonstrations or text-based?
- Watch for students' ease of using various features of the platform or Learning Management System.
- Listen for students discussing progress and explaining their work/ learning to peers.
- Listen to discussions between and among students that indicate research, problem-solving and other critical thinking skills have been integrated in the learning activity.
- Observe students' creative artwork, charts, graphs or graphic arts that demonstrate their application of skills to enhance or support their learning.
- Pay attention to how students communicate with the teacher and/ or each other. Are they using group messaging, breakout rooms, chat rooms, and/or direct messages?