Features of Effective Literacy Instruction by Component – Leader Look Fors Tool User Guidance

Oral Language Look Fors Tool

How to Use This Tool (Tool located on pages 2-3)

The Features of Effective Literacy Instruction by Component tool is meant to support instruction and create a plan for identifying areas of strength, areas of growth and trends across classrooms in instructional practices. The tool can be used over time, over multiple observations, to watch for improvement in instructional practices or to identify opportunities for targeted support at both the individual classroom level and for grade or school-wide support. This tool is not intended to be used for formal evaluation.

Items are intended to be marked as "observed" or "not observed." There may be times where, due to a variety of factors, all items in a section are not observable in a single lesson. This should not be considered problematic unless individual criteria are repeatedly missing, or a trend is determined over time or across classrooms. Ideally, school leaders will use the "Features of Effective Literacy Instruction by Component" look for document in conjunction with the "Features of Effective Instruction" document to ensure that effective features of explicit, systematic instruction are in place as well as specific "look fors" for individual components of literacy instruction.

The columns in the center of the observation form labeled "LP" (lesson plan) and "T" (teacher) provide options for different observation formats. In a more formal observation/feedback cycle, meeting with the teacher to review the lesson that will be observed may occur. In this case, the document provides a place to record whether the features of effective literacy instruction for each observable component are present in the lesson plan. This would be marked under the column with the heading "LP" as either a "+" (criterion was present) or "-" (criterion was missing). During the observation of instruction, the "T" columns can then be marked similarly to indicate criterion that are observed or not observed during the lesson observed. Specific notes about the observation and recommendations for future instruction can then be recorded in the "Evidence/Recommendations" section to provide targeted feedback to the teacher and set goals for next steps in instructional practice. In a less formal observation, only the "T" (teacher) column would be marked to indicate a criterion was observed or not observed during instruction. Alternatively, the observer could simply mark the check boxes next to each criterion to indicate a feature was observed.

Criterion Descriptions (pages 4-6)

Each criterion on the look fors document is a feature of effective instruction specific to the component skill under which it is listed. It is important for leaders to have sufficient knowledge about how skilled reading develops to provide effective feedback to teachers. This section of the user guide provides more detail about how to score each criterion to ensure consistency across users.

Literacy Look Fors Tool for Multiple Observations (pages 7-8)

An additional version of the Tool is located after the criterion descriptions that allows leaders to record observations across multiple classrooms or observe the same teacher over time. This version of the tool can provide a snapshot of effective literacy instruction in oral language across grade levels or schoolwide to pinpoint areas of strength, areas where additional support is needed, or other trends.

Teacher: _____   Date of Observation: _____   Observed by: _____

Features of Effective Literacy Instruction by Component – Oral Language	LP +	LP -	T +	T -	Evidence/Recommendations
Oral Language Indicators ❑ The teacher models use of academic language and elevated "teacher talk." ❑ The time the teacher talks is minimized to allow for student response/conversation within a lesson. ❑ The teacher asks questions throughout instruction that allow students opportunities for oral response. ❑ The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in discussions that include multiple exchanges (talk moves). ❑ The teacher models recasting, rephrasing, or repeating what students say to enrich oral language exchanges. ❑ The teacher provides sentence stems for scaffolding oral language. ❑ The teacher allows for "think time" so students can adequately craft and communicate oral responses. ❑ The teacher pairs or groups students appropriately for discussions.					

LP = Lesson Plan   T = Teacher

Oral Language Indicators	Mark as observed (+) if:	Mark as not observed (-) if:
Criterion 1: The teacher models use of academic language and elevated "teacher talk."	• The teacher intentionally uses elevated language structures when presenting material orally. The teacher uses proper grammar, speaks in complete sentences with varying sentence structures and embeds appropriate grade level vocabulary to model academic language in the classroom.	• The teacher delivers instruction using primarily informal language or grammatically incorrect or incomplete sentences. There is little evidence that the teacher intentionally embeds elevated language structures or vocabulary to model academic language.
Criterion 2: The time the teacher talks is minimized to allow for student response/conversation within a lesson.	• The teacher plans and delivers lessons with a balance between teacher talk and opportunities for students to talk.	• The teacher plans and delivers lessons in which the teacher talks the majority of the time, and student-response or discussion time is limited.
Criterion 3: The teacher asks questions throughout instruction that allow students opportunities for oral response.	• The teacher asks questions that require students to respond orally in a variety of ways (e.g. single response, choral response, conversational exchange, teacher/student, student/student, group discussion). • The teacher asks questions that encourage response in complete sentences rather than single word responses, when practicable.	• The teacher does not ask questions throughout instruction or only poses questions that require limited oral response (e.g. single word or short phrase response). • The teacher limits the options for responding orally (e.g. only calls on a single student to respond as the primary means of oral response).
Criterion 4: The teacher intentionally provides opportunities for students to engage in discussions that include multiple exchanges (talk moves).	• The teacher plans opportunities for students to utilize "talk moves" to extend, expand, make connections, and ask questions during discussions with peers. • The teacher has provided instruction and support in using "talk moves" to improve conversational turn-taking and deepen discussions.	• The teacher provides minimal opportunities for students to engage in discussions. • There is limited evidence of instruction and support for students to utilize "talk moves" to practice conversational turn-taking and discussion.
Criterion 5: The teacher models recasting, rephrasing, or expanding on what students say to enrich oral language exchanges.	• The teacher consistently recasts or rephrases what students say in order to provide a strong model of Academic English and enrich oral exchanges for students. ***Examples:*** *Student: I go playground?*	• The teacher rarely models recasting, rephrasing, or expanding on what students say and misses opportunities to support student's oral language development through these exchanges.

	Teacher: You would like to go to the playground now? *Student: The world is a big circle.* *Teacher: Yes, the Earth is round like a ball. We call that shape a sphere.*	
Criterion 6: The teacher provides sentence stems for scaffolding oral language.	• The teacher consistently provides sentence stems when students are expected to respond or discuss that support students to speak in complete sentences and explain or elaborate their thinking. Examples*:* *"A time I felt exasperated was _____ because _____."* *"The author said _____ and I think this means _____."*	• The teacher does not provide sentence stems for scaffolding oral language or provides them sporadically.
Criterion 7: The teacher allows for "think time" so students can adequately craft and communicate oral responses.	• The teacher intentionally pauses to allow students time to think before calling on students for a response, asking students to engage in discussion, etc.	• The teacher does not pause to provide time for students to think before calling on students for a response, asking students to engage in discussion, etc.
Criterion 8: The teacher pairs or groups students appropriately for discussions.	• The teacher intentionally pairs or groups students for discussions so that partnerships are respectful and mutually beneficial, including pairing struggling learners with students who are supportive and pairing English learners with more proficient English learners.	• The teacher pairs or groups students randomly without consideration of individual strengths, skills, abilities, or behaviors.

Effective Literacy Instruction by Component – Oral Language												
This tool may be used to observe literacy instruction across multiple classrooms. Write the teachers' names or the grade levels observed in the vertical column headings. If using the tool to record observations of one teacher over time, record observation dates in the column headings. During the observation, record whether each criterion was observed using a "+" for observed and "-" for not observed.												
Criterion 1: The teacher models use of academic language and elevated "teacher talk."												
Criterion 2: The time the teacher talks is minimized to allow for student response/conversation within a lesson.												
Criterion 3: The teacher asks questions throughout instruction that allow students opportunities for oral response.												
Criterion 4: The teacher provides opportunities for students to engage in discussions that include multiple exchanges (talk moves).												
Criterion 5: The teacher models recasting, rephrasing, or repeating what students say to enrich oral language exchanges.												
Criterion 6: The teacher provides sentence stems for scaffolding oral language.												
Criterion 7: The teacher allows for "think time" so students can adequately craft and communicate oral responses.												
Criterion 8: The teacher pairs or groups students appropriately for discussions.												

Notes: