



LITERACY TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION

STRUCTURED LITERACY WALKTHROUGH TOOL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF THE
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DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is providing non-regulatory guidance for DC local education agencies (LEAs) regarding the [Early Literacy Education Task Force report](#). Published in fall 2023, the report outlined four primary recommendations to improve literacy outcomes in the District. This tool is specifically designed to support the implementation of **Recommendation 3.1: The Task Force recommends that OSSE develop a walkthrough observation tool for structured literacy instruction to provide feedback as part of a cycle of continuous improvement for structured literacy instruction.**

The following is included within this document:

- Intended Purpose of Structured Literacy Walkthrough Tool
- Suggested LEA Personnel to Use This Tool
- Layout and Content of Tool
- Guidance on How to Use this Tool

INTENDED PURPOSE AND OUTCOME OF TOOL

This tool is designed to support high-quality instructional practices and is not intended to serve as a formal, summative assessment tool. The primary function is to collect initial observations of teaching practices and to support the instructional growth of teachers who have specific job roles, including K-5 general educator teachers, English learner (EL) teachers, and K-12 special education teachers. This tool is further designed to deliver targeted feedback for teachers in structured literacy instruction. By improving teachers' instruction in structured literacy, this tool supports students in becoming confident, skilled, and enthusiastic readers. This tool can be used in conjunction with or in lieu of a local education agency's (LEA's) existing process for observing and supporting teachers' structured literacy development.

SUGGESTED LEA PERSONNEL WHO MAY USE THIS TOOL

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL AS AN...		
ADMINISTRATOR	LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL COACH	TEACHER
<p>COACHING PURPOSES</p> <p>Conduct informal observation of a teacher (not tied to formal, summative evaluation) and provide the teacher with a deeper understanding of their instructional strengths, growth areas and actionable next steps.</p>	<p>COACHING PURPOSES</p> <p>Conduct scheduled teacher observations using this tool and provide the teacher with a deeper understanding of their instructional strengths, growth areas and actionable next steps.</p> <p>When observing teachers, identify the target skills to observe. Once those skills have been identified, conduct a series of observations to monitor progress in that area.</p> <p>WAYS TO CONSIDER A TARGET AREA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If students in a teacher’s classroom are all scoring low in phonemic awareness, this tool may be used to support observations of that teacher’s phonological and phonemic awareness instruction. • Teacher Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If teachers are currently learning about vocabulary instruction in a structured literacy training, this tool may be used to support observations of vocabulary instruction to support the application of this new knowledge. 	<p>REFLECTIVE PURPOSES</p> <p>Review the literacy concepts and evidence examples to identify areas of strengths and areas of support in your own practice. Use this tool to initiate a conversation with a coach or administrator and to help provide a uniform understanding of areas for seeking growth and support.</p>
<p>NORMING PURPOSES</p> <p>Conduct observations with the leadership team (including any instructional coaches) to norm around high-quality structured literacy instruction. To norm expectations, take time after the observations to share and compare notes from the observations and discuss what feedback administrators and others in the building should be providing to teachers.</p>	<p>IDENTIFY TEACHER NEEDS</p> <p>Utilize this tool during observations to discern patterns of strengths and areas for improvement among teachers. Then use these patterns to identify the specific training and coaching support that teachers still require.</p>	<p>PEER OBSERVATIONS</p> <p>Use this tool as a teacher during a peer observation of another teacher. Peer observations can help a teacher see practices in action, provide feedback to another teacher and can help a teacher grow in their own practice.</p>

LAYOUT & CONTENT OF TOOL

The top dark grey row starts with the application of literacy concept, which identifies specific instructional concepts you should be looking at during your observation. The feedback section is where you can mark if the teacher is trained, what type of evidence you see and jot down notes from the observations. For definitions of these terms please use the definition tab.

The tool is divided into subcategories that target phonology, decoding/encoding, fluency, comprehension and writing instruction.

This tool includes accessibility considerations for a general education classroom as well as considerations for literacy instruction in a dual language classroom.

EL Considerations are listed under each subcategory in both K-2 and 3-5.

Walkthrough Tool for Grades K-2		Feedback	
Application of Literacy Concepts	Evidence Examples	Teacher Trained?	Observation Notes
<p>Text such as the meaning/purpose, text genre & structure, knowledge demands and specific words, sentences and phrases. Text dependent questions illicit student's use of Teacher utilizes after reading procedures such as oral discussion and/or written response to a text dependent question.</p> <p>Teacher poses text dependent questions and fosters students' discourse through strategies such as turn and talk, think pair share etc.</p> <p>EL Considerations: Activate prior knowledge and build background knowledge by previewing the text, discussing related topics, and making connections to students' own experiences.</p>	<p>the question, providing scaffolds for students and modeling how to use evidence to support thinking.</p> <p>Evidenced by teacher preplanning and posing an oral discussion prompt or a written prompt for students to discuss after reading the text.</p> <p>Evidenced by teacher creating and implementing routines that promote student discourse around the text.</p> <p>Evidenced by teacher demonstrating knowledge of cultural and linguistic backgrounds of EL students and incorporating to build backg...</p>		
<p>Comprehension</p>	<p>See more specific examples here https://www.nj.gov/education/udi/docs/walkthroug.pdf</p> <p>Engagement: The learning goal or objective is posted and presented in student-friendly language. Students are engaged in various shapes and forms of activities such as active listening, writing, engaging in conversation with peers, or actively using technology.</p> <p>Representation: The teacher uses multiple media in presenting the lesson contents, e.g., visual, audio, sensory, manipulative, and learning tools. The teacher actively uses a variety of support materials (e.g., word wall, letter cards, sensory manipulatives, etc.).</p> <p>Expression: Multiple forms of assessment are available for students, such as verbal answers, gestures, options, etc.</p>		
<p>Accessibility: Ways to make the content accessible to all students. This is not only for special education teachers and students.</p> <p>Engagement: The learning environment is conducive to motivating students' engagement via diverse choices. The relevance of lessons to students' learning is explicitly stated.</p> <p>Representation: Lesson contents are presented in a variety of formats, and students are provided options to acquire knowledge and skills that reflect their diverse learning styles.</p> <p>Expression: Students are provided with options for expressing what they know using various learning tools.</p>			
<p>Dual Language</p> <p>Learning environment: Authentic literacy instruction in a Language Other Than English (LOTE). Dual language programs in grades K-2 often allocate more instructional time in LOTE to develop strong foundational skills with</p>	<p>Learning environment: The classroom is literacy rich with books in LOTE and bilingual books. There are labels around the classroom for vocabulary development and practice. Anchor charts and word walls represent the authentic literacy instruction in LOTE, not necessarily mirroring word walls and high-frequency words</p>		

The tool is divided into sections. Use the tabs on the bottom to navigate between them.

GUIDANCE ON HOW TO USE THE TOOL

Please see below for the recommended steps to use the tool. Three steps have *Broader Coaching Considerations* which are additional steps that can be performed by an administrator or coach and will lead to greater success when using this tool.

Before an Observation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prepare yourself for using the tool and conducting the observation. Review the tool to orient yourself to the literacy concepts you should expect to see in the observation2. Consider which section of the tool you want to use in your observation. It is not realistic to observe all concepts in one observation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider your comprehensive school plan to consider literacy areas of focus for your school. Align your observation to one of those areas.• Consider individual teacher needs and align your observation to that specific area of need for a teacher. Identifying individual needs can be done by reflecting on past observations of a teacher.• Consider student data to identify literacy concepts where students are performing below expectations. Conduct your observation during that instructional block for a teacher.3. If using the tool electronically, you can filter to the category (section) you are observing by using the drop-down menu in row 3, column C of the grades K-2 or grades 3-5 rubric. Users can also hide column E (evidence examples) for a more streamlined view. → Broader Coaching Consideration: <i>Have a pre-conference with the teacher to learn more about the lesson and how these practices may be evidenced. You may also want to preview the lesson plan with the teacher during this time.</i>
During an Observation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. As you observe an instructor or a lesson, focus on what the teacher is saying and doing relative to the literacy concepts outlined in the tool. Record low inference notes, e.g., the teacher said “x”, a number of students did “y”, in column H, Observation Notes.2. Complete the evidence column which illustrates if the teacher shows strong evidence, some evidence or needs support in the concept area. This step may occur during or following the observation. Definitions for strong evidence, some evidence or needs support can be found in the guidance and definitions tab.
After an Observation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the notes and evidence column (complete this now if you did not do it during the observation) and reflect on the teacher’s areas of strengths and areas of support.2. Draft the feedback to include praise for the teacher who has been observed, as well as next steps to address the area of need.3. Schedule a meeting with the teacher to discuss the observation. During this meeting, share both praise and next steps with the teacher. → Broader Coaching Consideration: <i>Provide the teacher with resources and ongoing coaching to support the area of need. Next steps may include the teacher reviewing a section of the LEA’s structured literacy training, conducting a peer observation with another teacher, or receiving coaching on identified areas of improvement.</i>4. Conduct a follow-up observation with this teacher to track progress in this area. Continue to provide coaching support for the teacher in specific next steps. Follow up these additional observations with debriefs to share praise and the next steps. → Broader Coaching Consideration: <i>Use a tracker to input the praise and next steps for each observation conducted. This will help you and the teacher track growth.</i>

CONTACT INFORMATION

Additional information about the Literacy Task Force Report can be found on OSSE’s [Literacy Education Task Force | osse \(dc.gov\)](#) website. For questions, contact Vaani Gupta at Vaani.Gupta@dc.gov



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