

Handouts

The Administrator's Overview

A Schoolwide Reading Intervention Approach for Middle School

	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III
	Strong Schoolwide Foundation & Content Area Strategies and Routines	Strategic Intervention	Intensive Intervention
Definition	Strong core instruction that includes cross-curricular academic literacy support for all students; implemented within a safe and positive school environment in which there is a schoolwide commitment to excellence	Reading classes or small-group instruction specifically designed to accelerate the reading growth of students with marked reading difficulties	Specifically designed and customized reading instruction delivered in small groups or individually to students with serious and persistent reading difficulties
Students	All students in content area classes	Students with marked reading difficulties	Students with severe and persistent reading difficulties; students who do not make sufficient progress in strategic intervention
Focus	Academic vocabulary and comprehension of academic text	Multisyllable word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension	Word study, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; individualized to address specific needs of the students
Program	General education curriculum with research-based vocabulary and comprehension instructional routines	Specialized, scientific research-based reading program(s) emphasizing word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension	Specialized, systematic, scientific research-based reading program(s) emphasizing the specific areas of needs of individual students

Table continues on the next page.

	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III
	Strong Schoolwide Foundation & Content Area Strategies and Routines	Strategic Intervention	Intensive Intervention
Instruction	Sequenced and scaffolded instruction that makes the curriculum accessible to all students	Carefully designed and implemented explicit, systematic instruction	Carefully designed and implemented explicit, systematic instruction
Teachers	Science, social studies, math, reading, English language arts, and co-curricular teachers	Intervention provided by personnel determined by the school; usually a reading teacher or other interventionist	Intensive intervention provided by personnel determined by the school; usually a reading teacher or other interventionist
Setting	General education content area classrooms	Appropriate setting designated by the school; usually the reading class or supplemental tutoring	Appropriate setting designated by the school
Class size	Heterogeneous and flexible groups within typical class sizes	Homogeneous instruction provided to small groups	Homogeneous instruction provided to very small groups
Time	In all content area classes throughout the school day	At least 50 minutes per day	At least 50 minutes per day
Assessment	Schoolwide benchmark assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year	Diagnostic assessment to determine the focus and pacing of instruction; progress monitoring twice a month on target skills to ensure adequate progress and learning	Diagnostic assessment to determine the focus and pacing of instruction; progress monitoring twice a month on target skills to better individualize instruction for students who do not demonstrate adequate growth

Adapted from Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at The University of Texas at Austin, 2005.

Flexible Scheduling Research Summary



Research Summary

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

In support of *This We Believe* characteristic:

- Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning

What is Flexible Scheduling?

Flexible scheduling is defined as creative use of the time in the school day in an attempt to match the instructional time and format to the learning needs of students. Flexible school schedules shift from a series of fixed-time (e.g., 40–50 minutes) instructional periods a day and toward substantially longer instructional periods (e.g., 75–150 minutes) characterized by more diverse teaching and learning activities (Belevino, Snodgrass, Adams, & Dengel, 1999). Brown (2001, p. 2) noted that “a number of authors have used the terms block scheduling, flexible scheduling, alternative scheduling, and intensive scheduling interchangeably;” conversely, others use these and similar terms to describe clearly related but distinctly different alternatives to traditional fixed-period time arrangements of the school schedule. For the purposes of this research summary, the term “flexible scheduling” is used to encompass the full array of alternative scheduling options that may be adopted by middle grades schools.

Flexible scheduling patterns address the concern for more appropriate learning environments for students and respond to the need, not for schools to be more organized, but to be more flexible and creative in their use of time (Spear, 1992). It has become apparent to practitioners that the structure of the school schedule influences the degree to which middle grades schools respond to the developmental needs of their students (Williamson, 1998). Flexible scheduling allows schools to optimize time, space, staff, and facilities and to add variety to their curriculum offerings and teaching strategies (Canady & Rettig, 1995). Additionally, by allowing for larger time blocks, flexible scheduling reduces the amount of time that students spend out of class (e.g., time spent moving between classes), which allows for more instructional time and less time during which students are more indirectly supervised. Flexibility of the schedule also serves to ease the transition of students from the self-contained elementary environment to the highly departmentalized

high school environment. Teachers are able to use time wisely to improve their teaching strategies and enhance curricular integration (DeRouen, 1998; Seed, 1998). Teachers are directly involved with students and are the best judges of time requirements for learning activities. Blocks of time enable them to make choices and have more control over the learning environment.

With large blocks of time to facilitate involvement, students benefit from less fragmentation and more engagement in project-based learning and interdisciplinary activities, promoting skill application, interpersonal relations, and decision-making skills related to concrete, relevant problems (Vars, 1993). Similarly, Arhar (1992) found that flexible scheduling increased student engagement and achievement and positive social ramifications (Arhar, 1992).

Types of Flexible Scheduling

While the flexibility of the school schedule is limited only by the creativity of the teachers and administrators in the school, various models have emerged as popular over time. Four such models are summarized here.

1. **Block Scheduling.** Most often used by interdisciplinary teams, blocks of time usually consist of two or more combined periods (Hackmann, 2002). In its simplest form, blocks are all the same length of time (e.g., 100 minutes). For example, in the common “4 X 4” (four-by-four) scheduling arrangement, students take only four classes in the first half of the year and four different classes in the second half of the year. In more creative arrangements, length of time devoted to each time block may vary based on the instructional needs of the teachers and students (e.g., core academic subjects may be assigned to longer blocks while advisory and electives are assigned to shorter blocks), and length of time devoted to any given block may vary from day to day. A common block arrangement in middle level schools consists of two blocks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon or, alternately, one before lunch and one after lunch.



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2. **Alternate Day Classes.** Sometimes referred to as an "A/B schedule," this arrangement assigns classes on an every-other-day basis during the week. A student can take music on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (A schedule), and art on Tuesdays and Thursdays (B schedule), with the core academic classes meeting all five days. Or, a career class and a study skills class can meet on alternate days, taught by two teachers or the same teacher, depending on staffing requirements. In some middle grades schools, the use of the A/B alternate day schedule refers to students taking two core academic classes (i.e., mathematics, science) on one day and the other two core academic classes (i.e., language arts, social studies) on the alternate day.
3. **Rotating Schedules.** Following a master schedule of all classes in sequence, classes are held at different times each day, by rotating the classes one period later each day. This process enables students to have all subjects at various times of the day and can be implemented by teams or by an entire school.
4. **Dropped Schedule.** Students are scheduled for more classes than class periods, with one class being dropped on any given day. This schedule provides allotted times for advisory programs, electives, assemblies, and other curricular offerings beyond core academic requirements.

While all of these alternatives pose the opportunity for greater flexibility, it is important that teachers and administrators not become so enamored with any particular alternative that it becomes just as restrictive as the traditional six- to eight-period day (Brown, 2001; Hackmann & Valentine, 1998).

Summary of the Research

While middle grades advocates for several decades have recommended flexible scheduling (cf. Alexander, Williams, Compton, Hines, Prescott, & Kealy, 1969; Beane, 1993; Curtis & Bidwell, 1977; Epstein & MacIver, 1990; Hackmann, 2002; Kindred, Wolotkiewicz, Mickelson, & Coplein, 1981; National Middle School Association, 1995, 2003), middle grades schools have been somewhat slow to jettison the traditional fixed-period day. The last two decades have shown a trend toward greater flexibility, however. In a national study, Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, and Melton (1993) reported that more than 90% of middle schools used traditional fixed time schedules, with seven instructional periods of 41 to 55 minutes per each period. These findings were corroborated by Epstein and MacIver (1990) and Alexander and McEwin (1989). Just a few years later, however, McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins (1996) found that 40% of sixth and

seventh grades and 27% of eighth grades surveyed had implemented some form of flexible scheduling, leading the researchers to conclude, "these data demonstrate the continued growth of team organizations with flexible control over daily schedules" (p. 38). In a similar 2003 study, McEwin, Dickinson, and Jenkins found one-third of fifth through eighth grades used some option other than self-contained or uniform periods. Meeks and Stepka (2004), in a statewide study, found that middle level principals in Arkansas overwhelmingly regarded flexible scheduling as a staff development need for their faculty, despite a number of years of implementation, noting, "Training is not needed just to implement middle level programs, but it is also needed to sustain and refine those changes" (p. 10).

Most exemplary middle schools use some form of flexible scheduling. In a survey of nominated exemplary middle grades schools (George & Shewey, 1994), 75% of the respondents indicated that flexible scheduling was moderately to well developed at their schools. In a study by Brown (2001) using structured interviews with 10 middle grades teachers involved in block scheduling, teachers reported a wider variety of instructional strategies that were more consistent with their students' learning needs under block scheduling than they had used previously under traditional scheduling. Teachers also noted that they tended to cover slightly less content in greater depth under block scheduling. Brown concluded:

Teachers describe[d] implementing several changes in their instructional strategies that benefit students: providing greater opportunities for student reflection; designing activities that promote critical and creative thinking through extended opportunities for manipulation of concepts and principles; and use of more student-to-student collaborative learning experiences. (p. 9)

Increased flexibility in scheduling has also been linked to a decrease in disciplinary problems among middle grades students (Smith, Pitkin, & Rettig, 1998). Reports from individual schools have confirmed increases in the levels and amount of collaboration among teachers on teaching teams within a flexible scheduling environment (McLeod, 2005; Seed, 1998).

Interestingly, most of the research on flexible scheduling has been conducted at the high school level. Following his review of the literature, Brown (2001, p. 3) noted, "Few studies on the implementation and impact of alternative scheduling at the middle school level exist." For example, studies at the middle level



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investigating the effects of flexible scheduling on important student outcomes (e.g., achievement, critical thinking, motivation, self-esteem and other affective outcomes) are relatively limited. Lewis, Cobb, Winokur, Leech, Viney, and White (2003), however, did investigate instructional effects of middle level students in three scheduling arrangements (traditional, alternate day, and 4 X 4 block scheduling) across two studies. One study focused on science standardized achievement test scores and the other on language arts achievement test scores. Comparisons favored achievement of students in the flexible scheduling arrangements in both science and language arts, with lower achieving students, in particular, benefiting from flexible scheduling.

Recommendations

While flexible scheduling is gradually becoming more commonplace in middle grades schools, a large percentage of schools are opting for self-contained environments or fixed-time instructional periods. Flexible scheduling options allow teachers greater flexibility in planning, foster interdisciplinary teaching, and provide opportunities to effectively serve the needs of students. As McEwin and associates (2003, p. 50) have noted, "All middle schools should adopt some form of flexible block scheduling that provides teachers with multiple opportunities to make sound decisions regarding curriculum and instruction for young adolescents they teach." The further adoption of flexible scheduling practices should be accompanied by additional research on the effects of varying scheduling arrangements on young adolescents' academic achievement, social and emotional development, and psychological well-being.

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This qualitative study focused on perceptions of 10 middle grades teachers from two middle schools regarding the effects of block scheduling. Specifically, the author explored participants' perceptions of the ability of the 4 X 4 block schedule, as implemented, to meet the needs of their students and their perceptions regarding the effects of the block schedule on their instructional decision making. Interview transcripts were analyzed using constant comparative analysis. Nine of 10 participants indicated they had altered instruction (e.g., used more cooperative learning, problem solving, and computer-based activities). Similarly, 9 participants indicated the implementation of the block schedule had positively affected their students learning (e.g., strengthened students' understanding of concepts, increased students' success as they moved from grade to grade). All participants indicated they had modified the curriculum as a result of block scheduling (e.g., reduced breadth of content coverage, increased depth of coverage), and half noted that they had altered their assessment strategies (e.g., focused less on rote memorization and more on problem solving).

Lewis, C. W., Cobb, R. B., Winokur, M., Leech, N., Viney, M., & White, W. (2003). The effects of full and alternative day block scheduling on language arts and science achievement in a junior high school. *Educational Policy Archives*, 11(41). Retrieved June 2, 2006, from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n41>

Using an ex post facto design, this study examined academic performance of middle grades students taught in 4X4 block, alternate day, and traditional scheduling arrangements. Two studies, one examining science performance ($n = 340$) and one examining language arts performance ($n = 111$) were conducted. Achievement was measured on a standardized test. Small to moderate statistically significant effects were found for instructional format and for the instructional format by achievement level interaction, with differences favoring students in the flexible scheduling arrangements. Examination of mean performance data indicated that lower achieving students, in particular, benefited from the flexible scheduling designs. While results should be replicated across other similar studies, the favorable outcomes of flexible scheduling are promising and have interesting implications for educational policymaking, in light of the high stakes testing environment that currently exists in the United States.



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ANNOTATED REFERENCES (continued)

McEwin, C. K., Dickinson, T. S., & Jenkins, D. M. (2003). *America's middle schools in the new century: Status and progress*. Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

This is the latest in a series of longitudinal descriptive studies focusing on programs and practices in middle grades schools. Results are compared with findings of studies conducted in 1968, 1988, and 1993. Data for the present study were collected in 2001 from 1,798 schools across the United States. Respondents provided data on a host of programs and practices, including, but not limited to, school enrollment, team organization, scheduling plans, time allocation, electives offered, advisory programs, sports, instructional strategies, and grouping practices. As to scheduling plans employed, data indicated a slight decline overall in percentage of schools using flexible scheduling arrangements as compared to the 1993 data. For example, only 34% of middle grades schools used flexible scheduling in fifth grade in 2001 compared to 40% in 1993. Similar results were found for grades six (33% compared to 46%) and seven (34% compared to 39%). Only in grade eight did instance of flexible scheduling increase (34% compared to 29%).

RECOMMENDED PRACTITIONER RESOURCES

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National Middle School Association (NMSA) produces research summaries as a service to middle level educators, families and communities, and policymakers. The concepts covered in each research summary reflect one or more of the characteristics of successful middle schools as detailed in the NMSA position paper, *This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents*. Further research on each topic is available in the book *Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe*. Both books are available at the NMSA online store at www.nmsa.org



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Sample Middle School Schedule

2010 - 2011 MASTER SCHEDULE

7th Grade

	A 8:15 - 900	B 9:02 - 9:47	C 9:49 - 10:34	1st 10:37 - 11:45	2nd 11:47 - 1:25	3rd 1:27 - 2:35	4th 2:37 - 3:45
Teacher				PAP LA	LA	PAP LA	LA
Teacher	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period	MATH	PAP MATH	MATH	PAP MATH
Teacher				SCI	PAP Sci	PAP Sci	SCI
Teacher				SS	PAP SS	SS	(BOYS ATH)
Teacher	(Tech Apps)	(Tech Apps)	(Tech Apps)				SS
Teacher	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period	LA	PAP LA	LA	PAP LA
Teacher				PAP MATH	MATH	PAP MATH	MATH
Teacher				PAP SS	SS	SS	PAP SS
Teacher				PAP Sci	SCI	SCI	PAP SCI
Teacher	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period	PAP LA	LA	LA	LA
Teacher				MATH	PAP MATH	PAP MATH	MATH
Teacher				PAP SS	SS	PAP SS	SS
Teacher				SCI	SCI	SCI	PAP SCI
Teacher	RES Math 8	RES Math 8		RES MATH 7			
Teacher			RES LA 8	RES LA 8		RES LA 7	
	A 7 8:15 - 900	B 7 9:02 - 9:47	C 7 9:49 - 10:34		A 8 1:26 - 2:11	B 8 2:13 - 2:58	C 8 3:00 - 3:45
Teacher	BOYS ATH	BOYS ATH	TEEN LDRSHIP		BOYS PE	BOYS PE	BOYS ATH
Teacher	GIRLS ATH	GIRLS ATH	TEEN LDRSHIP		GIRLS PE	GIRLS PE	GIRLS ATH
Teacher	BOYS/GIRLS PE	BOYS/GIRLS PE	BOYS/GIRLS PE		BOYS/GIRLS PE	BOYS/GIRLS PE	BOYS/GIRLS PE
Teacher	CHOIR	CHOIR	CHOIR		AT LA PORTE JUNIOR HIGH		CHOIR (BAKER)
Teacher	ORCHESTRA	ORCHESTRA	ORCHESTRA		AT BAKER	ORCHESTRA	ORCHESTRA
Teacher	BAND	BAND	BAND		BAND	INC	INC
Teacher	8th GRADE CLASSES					AVID	AVID
Teacher	AVID	TEEN LDRSHIP	AVID		TEEN LDRSHIP	TEEN LDRSHIP	TEEN LDRSHIP
Teacher	AT LA PORTE JUNIOR HIGH				HEALTH	HEALTH	HEALTH
Teacher	AT LA PORTE JUNIOR HIGH				SPANISH	SPANISH	SPANISH
Teacher	TECH APPS	TECH APPS	TECH APPS			(SS-7th)	(SS-7th)
Teacher	AT LA PORTE JUNIOR HIGH				TECH APPS	YEARBOOK	YEARBOOK
Teacher	ART	ART	THEATER ARTS			ART	THEATER ARTS
Teacher	READING LAB	READING LAB	READING LAB		READING LAB	READING LAB	READING LAB
Teacher	MATH LAB	MATH LAB	MATH LAB		MATH LAB	MATH LAB	MATH LAB

8th Grade

	1st 8:15 - 9:23	2nd 9:25 - 10:33	3rd 10:35 - 11:43	4th 11:45 - 1:23	A 1:26 - 2:11	B 2:13 - 2:58	C 3:00 - 3:45
Teacher	PAP LA	LA	LA	PAP LA			
Teacher	MATH	ALG	ALG	Planning	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period
Teacher	SS	PSS	PSS	SS			
Teacher	ATH	SCI	SCI	PSCI			
Teacher	ATH	LA	PAP LA	LA	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period
Teacher	ALG	MATH	MATH	MATH			
Teacher	SS	ATH	SS	PAP SS	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period
Teacher	PAP SCI	PAP SCI	SCI	SCI			
Teacher	LA	PAP LA	LA	LA	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period
Teacher	MATH	MATH	MATH	ALG			
Teacher	ATH	SS	PAP SS	SS	Team Meeting	Department Meeting	Conference Period
Teacher	PAP SCI	ATH	PAP SCI	SCI			
Teacher	RES Math 8		RES MATH 7	RES MATH 7	RES LA 7		
Teacher			RES LA 8		RES LA 7	RES LA 7	

Schedule provided by Lomax Junior High School in La Porte ISD, La Porte, TX

The sample schedule shows a reading lab (intervention class) for students who are struggling with reading. The course is supplemental to the English language arts (ELA) course and is limited to 15 students per section. Within each class, instruction is provided to the whole group as well as to small groups of five students. In addition, individualized teaching is incorporated throughout the week to address students' specific areas of need.

"This schedule offers seven course options for students with three elective choices (45 minutes each) and four cores (68 minutes each). We are planning to eliminate the passing times posted on the schedule to implement a no-bell structure, which would then allow for 70-minute core classes. One of the motivations for looking at the schedule was the need to allow our targeted 'below-level' students the opportunity to benefit from our reading lab and/or math lab as well as other elective choices.

The campus leadership team reviewed campus goals to begin the process of an appropriate schedule to meet student and staff needs. The schedule allows for teacher professional development as well as individual planning time. Departments will meet 2 days per week for 1 hour, and interdisciplinary teams will meet 2 days per week for 1 hour (with protocols to guide meetings). In addition, the fifth day will include schoolwide professional development, based on our campus plan and SMART goals. The schedule was approved by 100% of the faculty and then shared with the school board as an information item, which was also received positively."

— Leigh Wall, former principal of Lomax Junior High School

PEIMS numbers for middle school reading electives are:

Reading Elective Grade 6: 03273410

Reading Elective Grade 7: 03273420

Reading Elective Grade 8: 03273430

Using Data to Guide Instruction

- Gather information to help with overall planning and resource allocation:
 - Examine data to determine the proportion of students able to meet grade-level standards at the end of each grade.
 - Identify particular reading skills or standards on the progress monitoring or year-end outcome tests on which students are having special difficulties.
 - Evaluate current reading interventions to determine the impact on students' ability to meet grade-level standards.
- Use data to guide instruction for individual students:
 - Identify students at the beginning of the year who are at special risk of not being able to meet grade-level standards by the end of the year.
 - Determine which students are making adequate progress and which may need additional, or improved, instructional support.
 - Identify students' individual reading strengths and weaknesses.
- Select, administer, and evaluate assessment data:
 - Formal outcome assessments in reading
 - Formal or informal screening measures to determine instructional needs at the beginning of the year
 - Formal or informal progress monitoring assessments to determine whether students are making adequate progress in either their content area or reading intervention classes; also includes local benchmark assessments
 - Formal or informal diagnostic tests. Administer formal assessment when there is a need for specific information that cannot be obtained in some other, more efficient way. Administer informal assessments in an ongoing manner. Informal assessments include teacher observations, student responses to specific tasks, work products, questioning to determine student understanding, and strategies to determine instructional needs.
- Implement effective data management system:
 - Determine data management system needed to provide effective and timely access to all the data necessary to plan instruction for all students.

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Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment

HB 2237, Section 6: Adolescent Reading Assessment

As of the fall of 2008, districts are required to:

- Administer diagnostic assessment to students in grade 7 who did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the grade 6 Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Reading test.
- Provide intensive reading instruction and intervention to these students based on the results of the assessment.

The TALA English Language Arts (ELA) Academy will provide training on the administration and use of this assessment.

Structure of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)

Passage Reading Fluency subtest

- Administered to all students who failed TAKS Reading (scale score of 2,100 and below).
- Consists of three predetermined passages for each grade level and time point.
- Passages are a combination of expository and narrative text at varying difficulty levels.
- Students are scored on the number of words they read correctly in 1 minute and on their retell of the story.

Word Reading Fluency subtest

- Administered to students who read very slowly and laboriously on the Passage Reading Fluency subtest.
- Consists of three predetermined word lists for each time point.
- Each word list is at a different level of difficulty to assess the full range of student abilities.
- Students are scored on the number of words they read correctly in 1 minute, but the more important information on this subtest comes from analyzing the types of errors made.

Data Collection Points

The TMSFA has three official test administrations: beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY), and end of year (EOY). HB 2237 requires administration only at BOY, which is to fall within the first 6 weeks of school.

Separate sets of progress monitoring passages allow for the TMSFA to be administered in abbreviated form an additional three times during the year.

- Only one passage is administered for progress monitoring.
- Data are used to track student progress.

Guidelines for Interpreting the TMSFA

The TMSFA relies upon equated scores, not the raw words correct per minute (WCPM). Training will include how to convert the WCPM to an equated score and how to use the average equated score to determine instructional need.

The purpose of both subtests is to provide intervention teachers more information with which to plan instruction. Training will also include how to use the instructional routines in TALA to address identified areas of student need.

Caution About Interpreting the Results of the TMSFA

"These scores should *not* be viewed as discreet cutoffs to be applied indiscriminately to categorize students, but as heuristics that are tempered by teacher observations of the students' reading ability. In other words, these are **guidelines** that should be used along with other information available to educators about a student's reading needs. The variability around these scores is high, and brief screening measures do not substitute for careful observation. We also caution that nearly all struggling readers in middle school will need intervention in reading comprehension and vocabulary. Some students will *also* need intervention in decoding and/or fluency" (TMSFA Teacher's Guide, 2008, p. 33).

Who Can Administer the TMSFA?

Those who have been officially trained: Participants will receive a CD with all the assessment materials for grades 6–8.

Who Can Train Others to Use the TMSFA?

Those who have attended a TALA Training of Trainers session.

For licensing questions, please contact: **licensing@texasreading.org..**

For local training sessions, contact your regional education service center.

REFERENCE: Texas Education Agency, University of Houston, & The University of Texas System, 2008b.

Guidelines for Reviewing a Reading Program

Introduction

This document was developed to assist the Curriculum and Instruction Team at the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) as they review reading programs for grades 4–12 to determine alignment with current reading research.

Process of Using Guidelines

When reviewing a reading program thoroughly, it is not sufficient to examine only a sample of lessons. In order to determine whether a program is aligned with current reading research, it is essential to review all the teacher and student materials. This document was developed to help navigate a reviewer through the lengthy but important process of reviewing a reading program. It was designed to be utilized in conjunction with the resources listed below. When using this document, place a check mark in either the yes or no column after each question. If the answer is not clear or not evident, write “not evident” in the comments column and leave the yes/no columns blank. It is very important to use the comments column to detail specific examples, note questions, etc. When a question is marked “no” or “not evident,” it is a concern that the program may not be aligned with current reading research. That is, if a reading program is aligned with current reading research, then “yes” will be marked on all of the questions with evidence to support this assertion written in the comments column.

Note that this document includes the sequence of instruction from 4th through 12th grade.

It is expected that a comprehensive reading program will incorporate the five components of reading identified by the National Reading Panel (phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and reflect the elements of instructional design.

The following resources on the FCRR Web site (www.fcrr.org) will assist educators who use this tool to guide their review of a reading program:

- Glossary of Reading Terms (boldface words in the Guidelines are in the Glossary).
- Continuum of Phonological Awareness Skills.
- Continuum of Word Types.
- FCRR Reports (reviews of reading programs already posted).
- References and Resources for Review of Reading Programs.

The guidelines begin on the next page.

Overall Instructional Design and Pedagogy of the Reading Program			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a clear “road map” or “blueprint” for teachers to get an overall picture of the program (e.g., scope and sequence)?			
Are goals and objectives clearly stated?			
Are there resources available to help the teacher understand the rationale for the instructional approach and strategies utilized in the program (e.g., articles, references, and reliable Web sites)?			
Is instruction consistently explicit?			
Is instruction consistently systematic?			
Is there a coherent instructional design (e.g., are the components of reading clearly linked within as well as across each component)?			
Are there consistent “teacher-friendly” instructional routines that include direct instruction, modeling, guided practice, student practice and application with feedback, and generalization?			
Are there aligned student materials?			
Does the difficulty of the text increase as students’ skills strengthen?			
Are there ample guided student practice opportunities, including multiple opportunities for explicit teaching and teacher directed feedback, (15 or more) needed for struggling readers?			
Are all of the activities (e.g., centers) reading related (i.e., word-building, fluency practice)?			
Are teachers encouraged to give immediate corrective feedback?			
Is scaffolding a prominent part of the lessons?			
Are there specific instructions for scaffolding?			
Is differentiated instruction prominent?			
Is instruction individualized based on assessment?			
Are there guidelines and materials for flexible grouping?			
Is small-group instruction with (small teacher-pupil ratio) part of daily instruction?			
Is movement from group to group based on student progress?			
Are enrichment activities included for advancing/proceeding students?			
In addition to the components of reading, are the dimensions of spelling, writing, oral language, motivation/engagement and listening comprehension addressed?			

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<h3 style="text-align: center;">Word Analysis (WA) Instruction/Word Study</h3> <p style="text-align: center;">Phonological analysis, decoding, structural analysis, syllabication, context clues, spelling, & dictionary skills</p>			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Overall, does instruction progress from easier word analysis activities to more difficult?			
Is word analysis only a small portion of each lesson (10 to 20 minutes)?			
Does the program emphasize the use of grade-appropriate dictionaries and student-friendly explanations?			
Is there explicit instruction in the use and weaknesses of context clues to determine word meaning?			
Is explicit instruction in the meaning of roots and affixes provided and are there activities for students to manipulate common roots and affixes to analyze the relationship of spelling to meaning of complex words?			
Are word parts that occur with high frequency (such as un, re, and in) introduced over those that occur in only a few words?			
Are the limitations of structural analysis made clear?			
Are there activities for distinguishing and interpreting words with multiple meanings?			
Does the program include word origins, derivations, synonyms, antonyms, and idioms to determine the meaning of words and phrases?			
Are words used in word analysis activities also found in the student text?			
Once word analysis strategies have been mastered, are these strategies immediately applied to reading and interpreting familiar decodable connected text?			
Is there ample unfamiliar decodable text to provide practice with word analysis strategies?			
Are there ample opportunities to read multisyllabic words daily?			
Is there a section of the program devoted to word study?			
Does the program include spelling strategies (e.g., word sorts, categorization activities, word-building activities, analogical reasoning activities)?			

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Fluency Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is fluency building a part of each day's lesson?			
Does fluency-based instruction focus on developing accuracy, rate, and prosody?			
Do fluency-building routines include goal setting to measure and increase word-level fluency instruction and practice, reading accuracy and passage reading rate, teacher or peer feedback, and timed readings?			
Is fluency assessed regularly?			
Is there a fluency goal for each set of grade levels (e.g., 4-5 [113-127 wpm], 6-8 [140-142 wpm])? (Based on Hasbrouk and Tindal's end-of-the-year oral reading fluency scores at the 40th percentile.)			
Are ample practice materials and opportunities at appropriate reading levels (independent and/or instructional) provided?			
Are there opportunities to read narrative and expository text aloud?			
Are research-based fluency strategies included (e.g., repeated reading, peer reading, tape-assisted reading, choral reading, student-adult reading)?			

Vocabulary Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a component that incorporates reading and writing vocabulary?			
Is systematic and explicit instruction in morphemic analysis provided to support building word meaning through knowledge of root words, prefixes, and suffixes?			
Is high-level terminology used to bring richness of language to the classroom?			
Are there ample activities provided to practice writing vocabulary in context?			
Are there opportunities for wide, independent reading?			
Is there repeated exposure to vocabulary in many contexts?			

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Vocabulary Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there frequent use of teacher read-alouds using engaging books with embedded explanation and instruction?			
Is diverse vocabulary through listening and reading stories and informational text provided?			
Are a limited number of words selected for robust, explicit vocabulary instruction?			
Do sources of vocabulary instruction include words from read-aloud stories, words from core reading programs, words from reading intervention programs, and words from content area instruction?			
Are only important (words students must know to understand a concept or text), useful (words that may be encountered many times), and difficult (multiple meanings, idioms) words taught?			
Are vocabulary words reviewed cumulatively? For example, are words selected for instruction that are unknown, critical to passage understanding, and likely to be encountered in the future?			
Are ample opportunities to engage in oral vocabulary activities provided?			
Are student-friendly explanations as well as dictionary definitions used?			
Are word-learning strategies taught?			
Does the instructional routine for vocabulary include: introducing the word, presenting a student-friendly explanation, illustrating the word with examples, and checking the students' understanding?			
Are ample opportunities to use word-learning strategies provided?			
Is word awareness introduced through the use of word walls; vocabulary logs; and practice activities that are engaging, provide multiple exposures, encourage deep processing, and connect word meaning to prior knowledge?			
Is vocabulary taught both directly and indirectly?			
Are rich contexts for vocabulary learning provided?			
Are repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items prevalent?			
Are vocabulary tasks restructured when necessary?			
Is computer technology used to help teach vocabulary?			

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Comprehension Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is comprehension monitoring taught?			
Is the use of multiple strategies prevalent?			
Are cooperative learning groups part of instruction?			
Are frequent opportunities to answer and generate questions provided?			
Are graphic and semantic organizers, including story maps, used?			
Are there ample opportunities to engage in discussions relating to the meaning of text?			
Are there ample opportunities to read narrative and expository text on independent and instructional levels?			
Is explicit instruction in different text structures included?			
Are before-, during- and after-reading comprehension strategies emphasized?			
Is prior knowledge activated before reading?			
Are ample opportunities provided to generate questions during reading to improve engagement with and processing of text?			
Are there ample opportunities to employ a conceptual understanding of beginning, middle, and end in narrative text?			
Is learning to determine which strategy to use and why (metacognition) part of instruction?			
Are connections made between previously learned strategies and new text?			
Are strategies applied for authentic purposes using appropriate text?			
Is there an emphasis on creating independent strategic learners?			
Is strategy instruction cumulative over the course of the year?			
Are there frequent opportunities to discuss story elements and compare stories?			
Are elements of story grammar (setting, characters, important events, etc.) used for retelling a story?			
Are summarization strategies taught?			
Are opportunities provided to interpret information from charts, graphs, tables, and diagrams and connect it to text?			
Does text contain familiar concepts and vocabulary?			
Are main idea strategies previously taught (e.g., using pictures, then individual sentence, then paragraphs, etc.)?			

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Comprehension Instruction			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Are ample opportunities to employ main idea strategies using more complex texts, where the main idea is not explicit, provided?			

Listening Comprehension			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there an element of the program that requires students to follow specific oral directions in order to perform or complete written activities?			
Are ample opportunities to utilize listening comprehension strategies provided?			
Are there ample opportunities to listen to a variety of text structures?			
Are there ample opportunities to use reflective (describing feelings/ emotions that accompany what is said instead of information given) and responsive (e.g., repeating, paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning for elaboration and/or clarification) listening skills to make connections and build on ideas of the author?			

Motivation and Engagement			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there a component of the program that fosters intrinsic motivation in students (e.g., student selection of books, various genres of book titles, multicultural/international book titles)?			
Are there clear content goals for supporting intrinsic reading motivation?			
Is there a component of the program that fosters extrinsic motivation in students (e.g., external recognition, rewards, or incentives)?			
Are there ample opportunities for students to engage in group activities (social motivation)?			
Are there personal learning goals provided for reading tasks?			
Are students given immediate feedback on reading progress?			

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Assessment			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is rigorous assessment included in the program?			
Is formative evaluation included?			
Are the assessment instruments reliable and valid?			
Do the assessments measure progress in word analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension?			
Do the assessments identify students who are at risk or already experiencing difficulty learning to read?			
Does assessment aid teachers in making individualized instruction decisions?			
Does the program provide teacher guidance in response to assessment results?			

Professional Development for the Reading Program			
Characteristic	Yes	No	Comments (e.g., specific examples, strengths, concerns, questions)
Is there adequate time offered for teachers to learn new concepts and practice what they have learned (before implementation)?			
Is there a plan for coaches, mentors, peers, or outside experts to provide feedback to teachers and follow up assistance as they put new concepts into practice?			
Are teachers taught how to administer and interpret assessments that accompany the program?			
Is PD for the program customized to meet the varying needs of the participants (e.g., first-year teachers, coaches, principals)?			
Does the PD provide support (e.g., principal checklists, follow-up in class modeling, a video/CD for teachers to view modeled lessons, printed teaching charts, graphs, transparencies) to facilitate application of content?			

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Action Plan Template

Goal: Improve the academic literacy of all students.

Objective 1: Create a safe and positive school climate.

Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible for Accomplishing Action	Date Action Will Be Completed	Evidence of Implementation

Objective 2: Strengthen the core instructional program (Tier 1).

Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible for Accomplishing Action	Date Action Will Be Completed	Evidence of Implementation

Objective 3: Implement Tier II interventions to address students with marked reading difficulties.

Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible for Accomplishing Action	Date Action Will Be Completed	Evidence of Implementation

Objective 4: Implement Tier III interventions to address students with severe and persistent reading difficulties.

Action Steps to be Taken	Person(s) Responsible for Accomplishing Action	Date Action Will Be Completed	Evidence of Implementation

Teacher Self-assessment Rubric for Content Area Literacy Support

Directions: Please complete each individual component of the rubric below by selecting the levels of frequency and proficiency that best describe your use of literacy best practices and instructional strategies to support student learning within your content area.

Frequency:

- 1 – I don't use this best practice.
- 2 – I occasionally use this best practice.
- 3 – I frequently use this best practice during a lesson or unit.
- 4 – I consistently use this best practice during a lesson or unit.

Proficiency:

- 1 – I don't understand this literacy best practice or how to implement it in my classroom.
- 2 – I am hesitant about implementing this best practice and would benefit from seeing this practice in action in my content area.
- 3 – I am confident that the way I implement this best practice supports improved student learning in my classroom.
- 4 – I am extremely confident when implementing this best practice and believe my use of this practice could serve as a model for others.

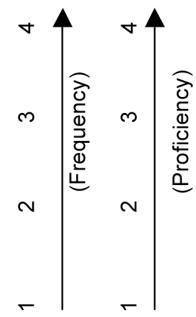
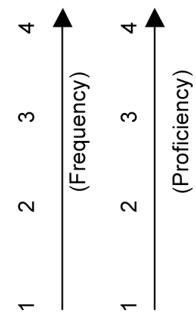
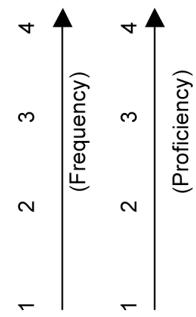
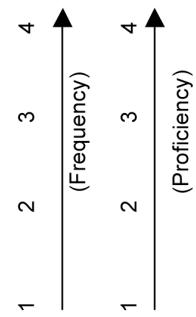
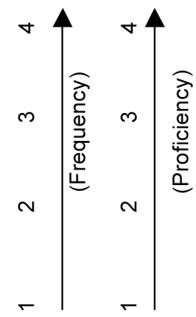
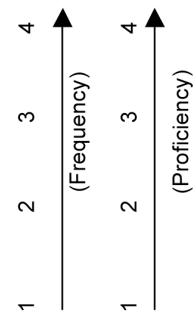
Literacy Component	Self-Assessment	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above																
READING COMPREHENSION <i>Use of high impact before-reading strategies:</i> I teach and provide opportunities for students to use the following specific strategies to support their readiness for reading tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating prior knowledge • Setting purpose for reading 	<table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">↑ (Frequency)</td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">↑ (Proficiency)</td></tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	↑ (Frequency)				1	2	3	4	↑ (Proficiency)				
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Literacy Component	Self-Assessment	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above
<p><i>Use of high impact during-reading strategies:</i> I teach and provide opportunities for students to use the following specific strategies to improve comprehension during reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying main ideas and supporting details/evidence by annotating/marking the text • Analyzing information by identifying fact, opinion, point of view, bias, generalizations • Asking questions to interact with text • Making inferences and drawing conclusions • Visualizing events, actions, relationships and/or patterns 	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Frequency) ↓</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Proficiency) ↓</p>	
<p><i>Use of high impact after-reading strategies:</i> I teach and provide opportunities for students to use the following specific strategies to help them respond to text after reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting about information and ideas in text reading • Using writing frequently in conjunction with reading • Summarizing information and concepts • Synthesizing ideas and information to enable transfer of concepts to new applications and situations 	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Frequency) ↓</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Proficiency) ↓</p>	
<p><i>Student-centered discussion:</i> I provide opportunities for students to discuss and share their understanding of content area texts through the use of strategies that encourage collaborative analysis, inquiry, and deep discussion.</p>	<p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Frequency) ↓</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Proficiency) ↓</p>	
<p><i>Wide reading:</i> I expect students to engage in reading a variety of types of content area texts, including electronic text/media, and I provide in-class opportunities and resources for them to read.</p>	<p>1 2 3</p> <p>_____ (Frequency) ↓</p> <p>1 2 3 4</p> <p>_____ (Proficiency) ↓</p>	

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Literacy Component	Self-Assessment 	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above 
<i>Text structure and organization:</i> I preview the organization and patterns of text structure with students in order to support understanding of content and I do this whenever I assign a new type of text (e.g., article, short story, textbook, word problem, graph, chart, or electronic text/media).		
<i>Gradual release of responsibility:</i> I help students transfer reading comprehension skills and strategies for independent use through a process of gradual release. The gradual release model includes these steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teacher instruction and modeling • Guided small group practice • Individual student practice with feedback • Independent application by each student 		
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT		
<i>Word rich environment:</i> I support students as they learn new vocabulary to better understand content concepts by using a variety of strategies to create a word rich environment.		
<i>Explicit instruction:</i> I teach students how to use strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect new words to prior knowledge • Generate definitions from contextual cues and word analysis • Organize new words around core concepts 		

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Literacy Component	Self-Assessment	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above
Repeated opportunities to interact with words: I provide students with multiple opportunities to connect with, use, and remember content vocabulary.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Frequency) </div>	
LISTENING/VIEWING		
Discussion of content: I use small group and whole group report outs to help students process and respond to what they hear or view.	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Frequency) </div>	
WRITING		
Informal writing assignments/tasks: I support students as they complete writing assignments in my content area:	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Frequency) </div>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before learning to activate prior knowledge and assess beginning understanding • During learning to deepen comprehension and concept development • After learning to respond to and communicate learning 	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Proficiency) </div>	
Formal writing assignments: I provide students with opportunities to research and to write longer pieces using the formats of written texts in my field (lab reports, journal articles, essays, handbooks, informational web page, math study guide, data analysis report, presentation board).	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Frequency) </div>	
	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> 1 2 3 4 (Proficiency) </div>	

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Literacy Component	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above																
<p><i>Use of the writing process:</i></p> <p>I support students by explicitly teaching and providing class time for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Organizing • Drafting • Peer conferencing • Review/revision/editing • Publishing/sharing 	<p>Self-Assessment</p> <table> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Frequency)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Proficiency)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4			(Frequency)		1	2	3	4			(Proficiency)	
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<p><i>Expectations</i></p> <p>I use rubrics or provide written criteria and exemplars with writing assignments to guide students' understanding of how to complete the assignment.</p>	<table> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Frequency)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Proficiency)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4			(Frequency)		1	2	3	4			(Proficiency)	
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<p><i>Feedback:</i></p> <p>I provide prompt and substantive written or verbal feedback on drafts of students' writing in order to support learning of how to revise and edit.</p>	<table> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Frequency)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Proficiency)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4			(Frequency)		1	2	3	4			(Proficiency)	
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		(Frequency)															
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<p><i>Student motivation:</i></p> <p>I provide choices to students on writing topics and arrange for them to write to authentic audiences (i.e., student newspaper, literary journals, and editorials).</p>	<table> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Frequency)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(Proficiency)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4			(Frequency)		1	2	3	4			(Proficiency)	
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1	2	3	4														
		(Proficiency)															

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Literacy Component	Self-Assessment	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above
DEEP DISCUSSION/PRESENTING	<p><i>Discussions:</i> I provide students with opportunities to connect and think about the concept being studied through the use of protocols to support discussion, active listening, participation, and decision-making.</p> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Frequency) </p> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Proficiency) </p>	
Student presentations: I require informal small group presentations early in the semester leading to more formal small group and individual presentations/speeches by the end of the semester.	<p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Frequency) </p> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Proficiency) </p>	
THINKING/METACOGNITION		
<i>Reflective thinking:</i> I encourage reflective thinking by expecting students to:	<p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Frequency) </p> <p>1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ (Proficiency) </p>	

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Literacy Component	Provide examples of how you use the best practices/instructional strategies in the classroom for self-ratings at Level 3 or above																
Self-Assessment																	
<p><i>Stimulating inquiry:</i></p> <p>I use specific strategies throughout the reading/learning process that help students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predict • Ask questions • Make connections to their own experiences • Consider implications of the topic being studied 	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">(Frequency)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">(Proficiency)</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	(Frequency)				1	2	3	4	(Proficiency)			
1	2	3	4														
(Frequency)																	
1	2	3	4														
(Proficiency)																	
<p><i>Self-monitoring and comprehension checks:</i></p> <p>I teach students how to monitor their own understanding of content material and self-correct errors that interfere with meaning and understanding.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">(Frequency)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">(Proficiency)</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	(Frequency)				1	2	3	4	(Proficiency)			
1	2	3	4														
(Frequency)																	
1	2	3	4														
(Proficiency)																	

Note: Examples of effective literacy best practices and instructional strategies are found within the lesson plans and scenarios for each of the core content disciplines. Also refer to the Content Literacy Guide for more detailed examples of some of the best practices and instructional strategies.

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Teacher Self-assessment Planning Tool for Content Area Literacy Support

Directions

Review the rating for each literacy component you identified in the *Teacher Self-Assessment for Content Area Literacy Support*. Record your proficiency and frequency level ratings for each literacy component in the appropriate box with a check mark (✓). For example, you should have a total of seven frequency check marks and seven proficiency check marks for reading comprehension. If you rated yourself at the same level for more than one literacy component, you will have multiple check marks in that box.

1. After completing the planning tool, you should use it for individual reflection to identify specific strengths and areas for focus. The following questions may be helpful to guide your thinking:
 - Are there certain best practices that you ranked yourself as proficient or use frequently?
 - Are there areas that you ranked low?
 - Were there discrepancies between proficiency and frequency?
 - What patterns do you see that highlight best practices in your delivery of content area information?
2. Identify specific action steps for improvement. See Additional Suggestions on Page 2 for ideas about how to plan action steps and professional development in a collaborative and strategic way with your colleagues.

Literacy Component Category	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Specific Action Steps to Improve My Level of Frequency/Proficiency of Implementation
Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction	Frequency				
	Proficiency				
Vocabulary Development	Frequency				
	Proficiency				
Listening/Viewing	Frequency				
	Proficiency				

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1

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Literacy Component Category		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Specific Action Steps to Improve My Level of Frequency/Proficiency of Implementation
Writing	Frequency					
	Proficiency					
Deep Discussion/Presenting	Frequency					
	Proficiency					
Thinking/ Metacognition	Frequency					
	Proficiency					

Additional Suggestions:

The purpose of this tool is to help teachers self-assess individual proficiency and frequency with the use of literacy instructional best practices. The results will provide a platform for deep discussion with your colleagues to plan for additional professional development and support to increase the current level of knowledge and understanding at your school.

Questions to guide the use of self-assessment results and powerful conversations of professionals at your school may include:

- Were there many practices that were used frequently by the faculty?
- Were there best practices identified in the rubric that were unfamiliar to many of us?
- How can we best implement those suggested best practices into specific core content areas?
- Are there collective areas for improvement that can be supported through support of the literacy coach or additional professional development?
- Are there teachers on staff who were proficient with some of the practices who may serve as peer coaches/mentors?
- How could we use the results of the individual assessments to focus departmental discussions for inclusion of best literacy practices with content areas?

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Content Area Lesson Rubric

Purpose of Rubric

Research has shown that what we often *believe* as teachers and what we actually *do* are not always the same (Hillocks, 1999). The purpose of this rubric is to help teachers bolster the literacy support being provided in specific content-area lessons by identifying areas of improvement.

This rubric is founded upon the belief that teachers must do the following in order to provide effective content-area literacy support:

1. Identify student-centered learning goals and objectives.
2. Provide support before, during, and after reading/learning activities in order to help students master content-area skills and processes.
3. Assess how well students meet the learning goals and objectives on a consistent basis.

Directions

1. Select a lesson plan to analyze.
2. Use the rubric on the following page to analyze the lesson.
3. Mark 'yes' or 'no' for the statement in each box.
4. Identify areas to target for future learning. Any box for which a 'no' was marked indicates a potential area to target for future professional development.

Reference

Hillocks, J., George. (1999). *Ways of thinking, ways of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.

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Identifying Student-Centered Instructional OUTCOMES.			
Yes		No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructional goals and objectives are clearly stated in measurable terms. If yes, list the goals or objectives:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The instructional goals and objectives provide learners with a clear understanding of what is expected of them.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outcomes are directly linked to state and or national standards.	

Providing Literacy Instruction and Support BEFORE Reading/Learning.			
Yes		No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The lesson includes a specific activity that is designed to PREPARE students for the reading / learning activity. If yes, name the strategy:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The before reading / learning activity is linked to the learning goals and objectives.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The before reading / learning strategy supports gradual release of instruction by MODELING or EXPLICITLY TEACHING students what they need to do or learn – e.g. Think alouds, providing exemplars, etc.	

Providing Literacy Instruction and Support DURING Reading/Learning.			
Yes		No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The lesson includes a specific activity that is designed to support students AS they read or engage in the learning activity. If yes, name the activity:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The during reading / learning activity is linked to the learning goals and objectives.	

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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The during reading / learning strategy supports gradual release of instruction by providing appropriate support AS students practice or complete a task – e.g. collaborative grouping.
--------------------------	--------------------------	--

Providing Literacy Instruction and Support AFTER Reading/Learning.

Yes No

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The lesson includes a specific activity that is designed to support students AFTER they read or engage in the learning activity.</p> <p>If yes, name the activity:</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The after reading / learning activity is linked to the learning goals and objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The after reading / learning strategy supports gradual release of instruction by having students INDEPENDENTLY demonstrate their learning – e.g. exit ticket, quick write, RAFT.</p>

Assessing Learning or Achievement of the Student-Centered Learning Outcomes.

Yes No

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The lesson includes a specific method for measuring or determining (informally or formally) how well students have met the learning goals or objectives.</p> <p>If yes, name the type of assessment:</p>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--

Targeting Areas of Growth and Learning

Review the boxes above. Any boxes in which you marked 'No' indicate potential areas for professional development. Identify these areas.

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Walk-through Guide for Content Area Classes

TEACHER:
CLASS:

DATE:
GRADE:

I. Effective Instruction

A. 0 The students are unaware of what they should know or be able to do as a result of the lesson.

- 1 The primary focus/instructional objective is posted in the room but is not obviously referenced by the teacher or students.
- 2 The teacher or students clearly state the primary focus/instructional objective of the lesson and use the objective to guide their learning.

N Not observed

B. 0 Teachers and students do not state how a literacy instructional routine can help them become better readers or learn new words in other situations.

- 1 The teacher or students inconsistently explain why or when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.
- 2 The teacher or students explain why and when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.

N Not observed

C. 0 Students do not know and are not told the steps of the literacy instructional routines.

- 1 Only some students know the steps of the literacy instructional routines.
- 2 The teacher or students clearly state the steps of literacy instructional routines.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher assigns work with a literacy instructional routine, but students do not know how to perform the expected behavior/skill successfully.

- 1 The teacher models only once and does not include a running oratory of the thoughts that are guiding the actions in each step.
- 2 The teacher or peers model the expected behavior/skill and think aloud to demonstrate how they are processing information or monitoring their learning.

N Not observed

E. 0 Students mostly work by themselves, and only a few students are called on to give short right/wrong answers.

- 1 Only some students are provided opportunities to share their thinking or reasoning.
- 2 Most students have opportunities to interact with the teacher, partners, and/or small groups to share their thinking or reasoning.

N Not observed

F. 0 After one or two examples done for them, students are asked to complete work with a literacy instructional routine on their own. Many students raise their hands in the first minute of independent practice to indicate they need additional help.

- 1 Students are provided only one opportunity to practice a new skill before being asked to work independently.
- 2 Students have multiple opportunities to practice a new skill with teacher and peer assistance before being asked to work independently.

N Not observed

II. Vocabulary Instruction

A. 0 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, and vocabulary work appears to be a separate activity unto itself.

1 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, but the instructional activities support a connection to the primary focus/objective.

2 The teacher clearly states the relationship of the identified vocabulary to the primary focus/instructional objective, and the instructional activities support that connection.

N Not observed

B. 0 The teacher does not check students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words or model breaking words into pronounceable parts.

1 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words, but when students struggle, they are not shown how to break the words into parts to help with pronunciation.

2 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words and, when necessary, the teacher and/or students break words into parts to assist with pronunciation.

N Not observed

C. 0 The teacher tells students to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary/glossary without providing explanation.

1 The teacher provides one or two student-friendly definitions for vocabulary words, but otherwise uses formal definitions.

2 The teacher provides student-friendly definitions for all vocabulary words.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher does not help students differentiate similar words or understand the appropriate contexts of word usage.

1 The teacher provides a contextualized example for the word, but does not help students differentiate similar words or inappropriate applications of the word.

2 The teacher and/or students generate more than one contextualized example for the word and, where appropriate, nonexamples of the word's usage and/or meaning.

N Not observed

E. 0 All vocabulary instructional activities are teacher-directed and present words in isolation.

1 Vocabulary instructional activities provide words in context but do not include discussions about the words or their usage.

2 Vocabulary instructional activities show the relationships among words and provide students multiple opportunities to practice saying, using, and discussing words.

N Not observed

III. Comprehension Instruction

A. 0 The teacher assigns or begins reading assignments without assisting students in previewing the text or the important ideas.

1 The teacher provides a list/overview of concepts that will be encountered in a reading assignment but does not engage students in a discussion about those ideas.

2 The teacher and students spend time discussing their opinions and prior learning about important concepts before those ideas are encountered in the reading assignment.

N Not observed

B. 0 If students read in class at all, they are engaged in round-robin reading with no opportunities for discussion.

1 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently) but have few or no opportunities to discuss their developing understanding.

2 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently) with many opportunities to discuss the material with the teacher and other students.

N Not observed

C. 0 During reading, the teacher conducts all the questioning with literal-level questions or has students complete worksheets.

1 During reading, the teacher asks questions that are primarily geared toward getting only the facts from the reading (literal-level questions).

2 During reading, the teacher structures multiple means to assist students in monitoring their comprehension by:

- Locating text evidence to support or refute opinions about the concepts
- Asking: "What is the author trying to tell us about this information?"
- Having students generate main idea statements

N Not observed

D. 0 After reading, students answer the questions at the end of the chapter or complete assignments that require students only to get the facts from the text. There are few opportunities for students to share their thinking about the text.

1 After reading, the teacher asks questions to check students' comprehension, but students do not have multiple opportunities to discuss their thinking or return to the text.

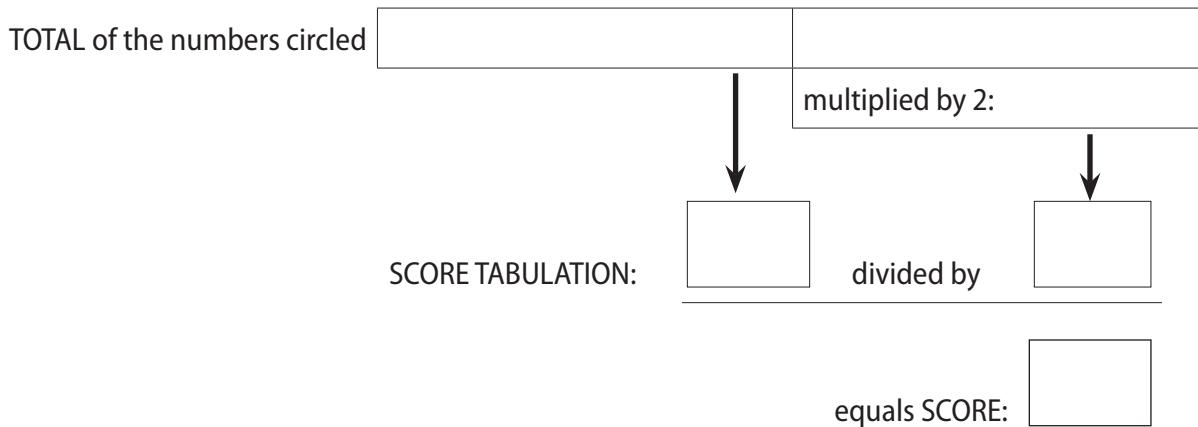
2 After reading, the teacher structures multiple means to discuss students' thinking about the text and to check their comprehension by:

- Having students generate summaries
- Having students use graphic organizers to record ideas
- Having students return to anticipatory or prediction statements to change or verify responses

N Not observed

Content Area Class Scoring Guide

Category	Sum of Scores (circle one)	# of Elements Observed (circle one)
I. Effective Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
II. Vocabulary Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	0 1 2 3 4 5
III. Comprehension Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	0 1 2 3 4



Score Interpretation

80% to 100%	High implementation of TALA instructional routines
60% to 79%	Partial fidelity to TALA instructional routines
Less than 60%	Low fidelity to TALA instructional routines

SCORE INTERPRETATION adapted from Bryant et al., 2000; Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Klingner, 1998.

Walk-through Guide for Reading Intervention Classes

TEACHER:
CLASS:

DATE:
GRADE:

I. Word Identification Instruction

A. 0 Students are inappropriately grouped for instruction in word identification, so most students' needs are not met.

1 Many students are receiving targeted instruction in word identification but some are inappropriately grouped.

2 The grouping and instruction in word identification is clearly targeted to each student's individual needs.

N Not observed

B. 0 The teacher seems unfamiliar with syllable types and/or does not directly explain the syllable types to students.

1 The teacher provides instruction in syllable types but does not follow a systematic scope and sequence.

2 The teacher provides explicit, systematic instruction in syllable types with multiple opportunities for students to actively respond.

N Not observed

C. 0 Students appear to be completing work with syllable types as isolated drills without a clear purpose to improve their reading and understanding of text.

1 The teacher directs the application of syllable types to identify unfamiliar words but this activity is not explicitly related to improving students' reading and understanding of text.

2 Students are asked to use their knowledge of syllable types to identify unfamiliar words encountered in reading authentic texts, and the students understand the purpose is to improve their understanding of text.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher seems unfamiliar with prefixes, roots, and suffixes and/or does not directly explain them to students.

1 The teacher provides instruction in prefixes, roots, and suffixes but does not follow a systematic scope and sequence.

2 The teacher provides explicit, systematic instruction in prefixes, roots, and suffixes with multiple opportunities for students to actively respond.

N Not observed

E. 0 Students appear to be completing work with prefixes, roots, and suffixes as isolated drills without a clear purpose to improve their reading and understanding of text.

1 The teacher directs the application of prefixes, roots, and suffixes to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, but this activity is not explicitly related to improving students' reading comprehension.

2 Students are asked to use their knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words encountered in reading authentic texts, and the students understand the purpose is to improve their reading comprehension.

N Not observed

II. Fluency Instruction

A. 0 The teacher does not actively monitor students during fluency practice.

1 The teacher monitors fluency practice but does not record individual students' performance.

2 The teacher monitors individual students' fluency by listening to their oral reading and calculating their words correct per minute.

N Not observed

B. 0 Students do not know the steps of the fluency routine used and/or are not using the instructional time appropriately.

1 Only some students know the steps of the fluency routine used, and instructional time could be used more efficiently.

2 Most students are familiar with the steps and procedures for the fluency routine and make maximum use of the instructional time provided.

N Not observed

III. Effective Instruction

A. 0 The students are unaware of what they should know or be able to do as a result of the lesson.

1 The primary focus/instructional objective is posted in the room but is not obviously referenced by the teacher or students.

2 The teacher or students clearly state the primary focus/instructional objective of the lesson and use the objective to guide their learning.

N Not observed

B. 0 Teachers and students do not state how a literacy instructional routine can help them become better readers or learn new words in other situations.

1 The teacher or students inconsistently explain why or when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.

2 The teacher or students explain why and when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.

N Not observed

C. 0 Students do not know and are not told the steps of the literacy instructional routines.

1 Only some students know the steps of the literacy instructional routines.

2 The teacher or students clearly state the steps of literacy instructional routines.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher assigns work with a literacy instructional routine, but students do not know how to perform the expected behavior/skill successfully.

1 The teacher models only once and does not include a running oratory of the thoughts that are guiding the actions in each step.

2 The teacher or peers model the expected behavior/skill and think aloud to demonstrate how they are processing information or monitoring their learning.

N Not observed

E. 0 Students mostly work by themselves, and only a few students are called on to give short right/wrong answers.

1 Only some students are provided opportunities to share their thinking or reasoning.

2 Most students have opportunities to interact with the teacher, partners, and/or small groups to share their thinking or reasoning.

N Not observed

F. 0 After one or two examples done for them, students are asked to complete work with a literacy instructional routine on their own. Many students raise their hands in the first minute of independent practice to indicate they need additional help.

1 Students are provided only one opportunity to practice a new skill before being asked to work independently.

2 Students have multiple opportunities to practice a new skill with teacher and peer assistance before being asked to work independently.

N Not observed

IV. Vocabulary Instruction

A. 0 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, and vocabulary work appears to be a separate activity unto itself.

1 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, but the instructional activities support a connection to the primary focus/objective.

2 The teacher clearly states the relationship of the identified vocabulary to the primary focus/instructional objective, and the instructional activities support that connection.

N Not observed

B. 0 The teacher does not check students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words or model breaking words into pronounceable parts.

1 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words, but when students struggle, they are not shown how to break the words into parts to help with pronunciation.

2 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words and, when necessary, the teacher and/or students break words into parts to assist with pronunciation.

N Not observed

C. 0 Teacher tells students to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary/glossary without providing explanation.

1 The teacher provides one or two student-friendly definitions for vocabulary words but otherwise uses formal definitions.

2 The teacher provides student-friendly definitions for all vocabulary words.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher does not help students differentiate similar words or understand the appropriate contexts of word usage.

1 The teacher provides a contextualized example for the word but does not help students differentiate similar words or inappropriate applications of the word.

2 The teacher and/or students generate more than one contextualized example for the word and, where appropriate, nonexamples of the word's usage and/or meaning.

N Not observed

E. 0 All vocabulary instructional activities are teacher-directed and present words in isolation.

1 Vocabulary instructional activities provide words in context but do not include discussions about the words or their usage.

2 Vocabulary instructional activities show the relationships among words and provide students multiple opportunities to practice saying, using, and discussing words.

N Not observed

V. Comprehension Instruction

A. 0 The teacher assigns or begins reading assignments without assisting students in previewing the text or the important ideas.

1 The teacher provides a list/overview of concepts that will be encountered in a reading assignment but does not engage students in a discussion about those ideas.

2 The teacher and students spend time discussing their opinions and prior learning about important concepts before those ideas are encountered in the reading assignment.

N Not observed

B. 0 If students read in class at all, they are engaged in round-robin reading with no opportunities for discussion.

1 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently), but have few or no opportunities to discuss their developing understanding.

2 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently) with many opportunities to discuss the material with the teacher and other students.

N Not observed

C. 0 During reading, the teacher conducts all the questioning with literal-level questions or has students complete worksheets.

1 During reading, the teacher asks questions that are primarily geared toward getting only the facts from the reading (literal-level questions).

2 During reading, the teacher structures multiple means to assist students in monitoring their comprehension by:

- Locating text evidence to support or refute opinions about the concepts
- Asking: "What is the author trying to tell us about this information?"
- Having students generate main idea statements
- Having students generate their own comprehension questions at differing levels of complexity

N Not observed

D. 0 After reading, students answer the questions at the end of the chapter or complete assignments that require students only to get the facts from the text. There are few opportunities for students to share their thinking about the text.

1 After reading, the teacher asks questions to check students' comprehension, but students do not have multiple opportunities to discuss their thinking or return to the text.

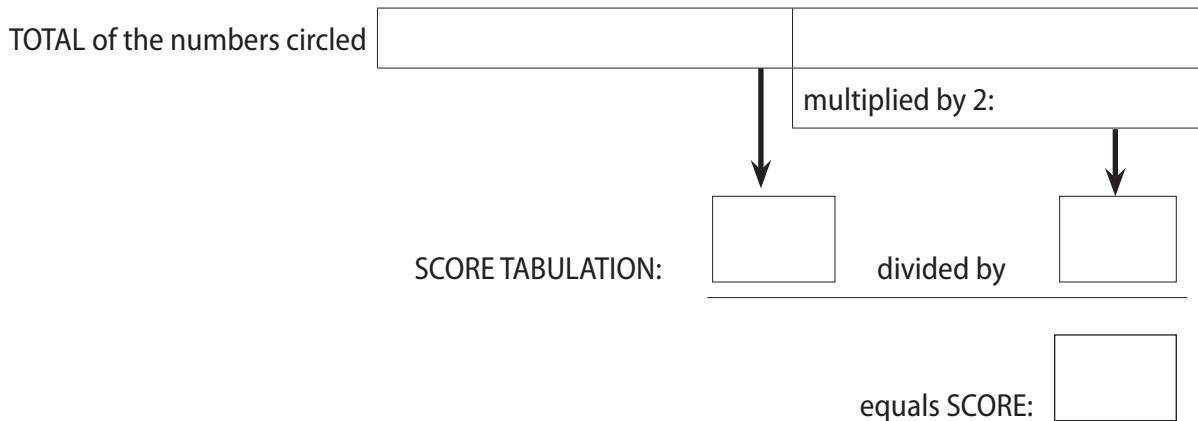
2 After reading, the teacher structures multiple means to discuss students' thinking about the text and to check their comprehension by:

- Having students generate summaries
- Having students use graphic organizers to record ideas
- Having students return to anticipatory or prediction statements to change or verify responses
- Having students ask each other self-generated comprehension questions of differing levels of complexity

N Not observed

Reading Intervention Class Scoring Guide

Category	Sum of Scores (circle one)	# of Elements Observed (circle one)
I. Word ID Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	0 1 2 3 4 5
II. Fluency Instruction	0 1 2 3 4	0 1 2
III. Effective Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
IV. Vocabulary Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	0 1 2 3 4 5
V. Comprehension Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	0 1 2 3 4



Score Interpretation

80% to 100%	High implementation of TALA instructional routines
60% to 79%	Partial fidelity to TALA instructional routines
Less than 60%	Low fidelity to TALA instructional routines

SCORE INTERPRETATION adapted from Bryant et al., 2000; Vaughn et al., 1998.

Critical Elements of a School-level Literacy Action Plan

Instructional Leadership

School Literacy Leadership Team

- 1. Our school has identified a Literacy Leadership Team composed of content area teachers, reading specialists, and administrators.
- 2. The Literacy Leadership Team has identified the priorities for literacy improvements in our school.
- 3. The Literacy Leadership Team has resources to address priorities for literacy improvements in our school.
- 4. The Literacy Leadership Team has identified strategies to address the priorities it has identified for our school.
- 5. The Literacy Leadership Team studies research-based practices for improving reading achievement in our school.
- 6. The Literacy Leadership Team has developed a written plan for improving reading achievement in our school.
- 7. The Literacy Leadership Team provides leadership for improving reading achievement in our school.

Staff to meet the needs of all learners

- 8. Knowledgeable and experienced teachers have been assigned to provide intervention support for struggling readers in our school.
- 9. Teachers who work with struggling readers in our school received regular and ongoing professional development to increase their knowledge and skills.
- 10. Teachers who work with struggling readers have high-quality instructional materials.

A schedule to meet the needs of all students

- 11. Our school provides extended instructional time during the regular schedule for struggling readers.
- 12. Our school provides additional instructional time before and after school for struggling readers.
- 13. Our school provides additional instructional time in summer programs for struggling readers.

- 14. Our school emphasizes reading throughout the school day through a variety of activities such as book clubs, reading activities during lunchtime, and literacy-related home room activities.

Professional development plan

- 15. Our school has designated reading coaches to assist teachers with the specific needs of struggling readers in our school.
- 16. Grade-level teams in our school have a process for studying research-based literacy practices specifically related to the literacy needs of our students.
- 17. Reading coaches and other teachers provide demonstration teaching of research-based literacy strategies directly related to the literacy needs of our students.
- 18. Teachers in our school learn research-based literacy strategies related to the specific needs of our students through frequent mini-professional development meetings.

Oversight and supervision

- 19. Principals visit all content area classrooms weekly to determine implementation of research-based literacy strategies.
- 20. Principals visit all reading intervention classrooms weekly to determine implementation of research-based literacy strategies.
- 21. Principals discuss with teachers what they expect to see in classrooms before their visits.
- 22. Teachers have received professional development in strategies that principals are expecting to see in classroom visits.

Implementation of the literacy plan

- 23. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have developed a written plan for improving reading achievement in this school.
- 24. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have communicated this plan to all the instructional staff in our school.
- 25. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have identified a way to monitor implementation of the school's literacy plan.
- 26. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have identified ways to regularly celebrate and reward student achievement.
- 27. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have identified ways to regularly celebrate and reward teacher accomplishments.
- 28. Principals and the Literacy Leadership Team have identified ways to regularly celebrate and reward school-level accomplishments.

Use of Data to Guide Instruction

Information for planning and resource allocation

- 29. Teachers use data on the proportion of students meeting grade-level standards at the end of each grade to improve literacy instruction at our school.
- 30. Teachers at our school regularly and frequently monitor the progress of students on particular reading skills or standards on which they are having special difficulties.
- 31. Data from student assessments at our school are used to plan school-level professional development.
- 32. Data are collected, analyzed, and used to determine the effectiveness of interventions for struggling readers in our school.
- 33. Data from classrooms are used to plan extra support for individual teachers to help students improve their performance on specific grade-level literacy standards.

Information for guiding instruction for individual students

- 34. Data are collected, analyzed, and used at the beginning of the school year to identify and support students who are at special risk of not being able to meet grade-level standards by the end of the year.
- 35. Data are collected, analyzed, and used throughout the school year to identify and support students who are not making adequate progress and may need additional or improved instructional support.
- 36. Data are collected, analyzed, and used to identify individual reading strengths and weaknesses in order to provide appropriate instruction and support.

Information from a variety of assessments

- 37. Data from formal outcome assessments, such as state tests, are collected, analyzed, and used to determine the proportion of students meeting specific objectives of grade-level standards.
- 38. Data from formal outcome assessments, such as state tests, are collected, analyzed, and used to compare student performance across several years.
- 39. Data from formal outcome assessments, such as state tests, are collected, analyzed, and used to determine the effectiveness of reading interventions.
- 40. Data from formal or informal screening measures are collected, analyzed, and used at the beginning of the school year to determine which students in our school are in need of more intensive interventions.
- 41. For students in need of more intensive interventions, placement tests are used in our school to plan initial instruction or to place students in instructional groups.

- 42. Data from formal or informal progress monitoring assessments (e.g., benchmarks) are used in our school to identify students who have fallen behind during the school year and who are in need of special support in order to meet grade-level standards by the end of the year.
- 43. Data from formal or informal progress monitoring assessments (e.g., benchmarks) are used in our school to determine whether students are making adequate progress in their reading intervention classes.
- 44. Data from informal diagnostic tests are collected, analyzed, and used by skilled intervention teachers in our school to determine which students need a formal diagnostic assessment.
- 45. Data from formal diagnostic tests are collected, analyzed, and used by skilled intervention teachers in our school to determine a student's instructional needs and guide intensive individualized instruction.

A data management system

- 46. Our school has a data management system that makes data easy to understand for everyone who needs to use them.
- 47. Our school has a data management system that provides effective and timely access to all the data necessary to plan instruction for students.

Decision-making meetings

- 48. Leaders and teachers in our school meet regularly to examine data and make decisions.
- 49. Decision-making meetings are attended by all who are necessary to make and follow up on decisions.
- 50. Teachers know ahead of time what types of data will be reviewed at our data meetings.
- 51. Teachers in our school use standard forms or formats in order to collect and analyze data in a consistent way.
- 52. Our school has a process for recording decisions and designating responsibility for follow-up on decisions made at our meetings.
- 53. Principals in our school are knowledgeable about student data and actively use them to guide a variety of instructional decisions.

Appropriate and Effective Instructional Materials

Books to enhance literacy instruction

- 54. Content area teachers at our school have access to books written at different levels of difficulty.
- 55. Content area teachers at our school use books written at different levels of difficulty to communicate information, spark interest in specific topics, and provide opportunities for additional student research.
- 56. Intervention teachers at our school have access to books at the appropriate level of difficulty for their students.
- 57. Intervention teachers at our school use books at the appropriate level of difficulty to engage students in reading.

Instructional programs

- 58. Our school has a variety of computer programs available to teach and provide practice on literacy skills.
- 59. The computer programs at our school are teacher guided and part of our comprehensive instructional program to increase student reading proficiency.
- 60. Our reading intervention program contains a comprehensive scope and sequence.
- 61. Our reading intervention program contains explicit instructional routines and appropriate practice materials.
- 62. Teachers in our reading intervention program are well trained in program procedures and understand the rationale for the instructional approach(es) used.
- 63. Teachers in our school, including content area teachers, use supplementary instructional materials to help them acquire and use powerful teaching skills.
- 64. Teachers at our school have access to multiple copies of books or articles to enable them to discuss effective research-based literacy practices with colleagues.
- 65. Teachers meet with colleagues in regularly scheduled study groups to investigate and explore how to implement effective research-based literacy practices.
- 66. Principals in our school know what constitutes an effective research-based instructional program in literacy.
- 67. Principals in our school participate with teachers in exploring how to implement effective research-based literacy practices.

Criteria for Diagnostic Reading Assessments for Middle School Students

1. The assessment must have been normed on and intended for use with the grade level being tested.
2. The assessment must be based on scientific research published in peer-reviewed journals.
3. The assessment must have a substantiated reliability and validity.
4. The assessment must identify specific skill difficulties in:
 - a. Word Identification
 - b. Fluency
 - c. Comprehension
5. The assessment must have a scoring structure which yields a separate score for each reading skill included.
6. The assessment must assist teachers in making individualized instructional decisions based on the results.

Sample Walk-through Guide for Reading Intervention

TEACHER:
CLASS:

DATE:
GRADE:

I. Word Identification Instruction

A. 0 Students are inappropriately grouped for instruction in word identification, so most students' needs are not met.

1 Many students are receiving targeted instruction in word identification but some are inappropriately grouped.
 2 The grouping and instruction in word identification is clearly targeted to each student's individual needs.
 N Not observed

B. 0 The teacher seems unfamiliar with syllable types and/or does not directly explain the syllable types to students.

1 The teacher provides instruction in syllable types but does not follow a systematic scope and sequence.
 2 The teacher provides explicit, systematic instruction in syllable types with multiple opportunities for students to actively respond.
 N Not observed

C. 0 Students appear to be completing work with syllable types as isolated drills without a clear purpose to improve their reading and understanding of text.

1 The teacher directs the application of syllable types to identify unfamiliar words but this activity is not explicitly related to improving students' reading and understanding of text.
 2 Students are asked to use their knowledge of syllable types to identify unfamiliar words encountered in reading authentic texts, and the students understand the purpose is to improve their understanding of text.
 N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher seems unfamiliar with prefixes, roots, and suffixes and/or does not directly explain them to students.

1 The teacher provides instruction in prefixes, roots, and suffixes but does not follow a systematic scope and sequence.
 2 The teacher provides explicit, systematic instruction in prefixes, roots, and suffixes with multiple opportunities for students to actively respond.
 N Not observed

E. 0 Students appear to be completing work with prefixes, roots, and suffixes as isolated drills without a clear purpose to improve their reading and understanding of text.

1 The teacher directs the application of prefixes, roots, and suffixes to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, but this activity is not explicitly related to improving students' reading comprehension.
 2 Students are asked to use their knowledge of prefixes, roots, and suffixes to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words encountered in reading authentic texts, and the students understand the purpose is to improve their reading comprehension.
 N Not observed

II. Fluency Instruction

A. 0 The teacher does not actively monitor students during fluency practice.

1 The teacher monitors fluency practice but does not record individual students' performance.

2 The teacher monitors individual students' fluency by listening to their oral reading and calculating their words correct per minute.

N Not observed

B. 0 Students do not know the steps of the fluency routine used and/or are not using the instructional time appropriately.

1 Only some students know the steps of the fluency routine used, and instructional time could be used more efficiently.

2 Most students are familiar with the steps and procedures for the fluency routine and make maximum use of the instructional time provided.

N Not observed

III. Effective Instruction

A. 0 The students are unaware of what they should know or be able to do as a result of the lesson.

1 The primary focus/instructional objective is posted in the room but is not obviously referenced by the teacher or students.

2 The teacher or students clearly state the primary focus/instructional objective of the lesson and use the objective to guide their learning.

N Not observed

B. 0 Teachers and students do not state how a literacy instructional routine can help them become better readers or learn new words in other situations.

1 The teacher or students inconsistently explain why or when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.

2 The teacher or students explain why and when to use a particular literacy instructional routine to support their learning.

N Not observed

C. 0 Students do not know and are not told the steps of the literacy instructional routines.

1 Only some students know the steps of the literacy instructional routines.

2 The teacher or students clearly state the steps of literacy instructional routines.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher assigns work with a literacy instructional routine, but students do not know how to perform the expected behavior/skill successfully.

1 The teacher models only once and does not include a running oratory of the thoughts that are guiding the actions in each step.

2 The teacher or peers model the expected behavior/skill and think aloud to demonstrate how they are processing information or monitoring their learning.

N Not observed

E. 0 Students mostly work by themselves, and only a few students are called on to give short right/wrong answers.

1 Only some students are provided opportunities to share their thinking or reasoning.

2 Most students have opportunities to interact with the teacher, partners, and/or small groups to share their thinking or reasoning.

N Not observed

F. 0 After one or two examples done for them, students are asked to complete work with a literacy instructional routine on their own. Many students raise their hands in the first minute of independent practice to indicate they need additional help.

1 Students are provided only one opportunity to practice a new skill before being asked to work independently.

2 Students have multiple opportunities to practice a new skill with teacher and peer assistance before being asked to work independently.

N Not observed

IV. Vocabulary Instruction

A. 0 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, and vocabulary work appears to be a separate activity unto itself.

1 The teacher does not explicitly state how vocabulary words will assist students in meeting the instructional objective, but the instructional activities support a connection to the primary focus/objective.

2 The teacher clearly states the relationship of the identified vocabulary to the primary focus/instructional objective, and the instructional activities support that connection.

N Not observed

B. 0 The teacher does not check students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words or model breaking words into pronounceable parts.

1 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words, but when students struggle, they are not shown how to break the words into parts to help with pronunciation.

2 The teacher monitors students' pronunciation of multisyllabic words and, when necessary, the teacher and/or students break words into parts to assist with pronunciation.

N Not observed

C. 0 Teacher tells students to look up unfamiliar words in the dictionary/glossary without providing explanation.

1 The teacher provides one or two student-friendly definitions for vocabulary words but otherwise uses formal definitions.

2 The teacher provides student-friendly definitions for all vocabulary words.

N Not observed

D. 0 The teacher does not help students differentiate similar words or understand the appropriate contexts of word usage.

1 The teacher provides a contextualized example for the word but does not help students differentiate similar words or inappropriate applications of the word.

2 The teacher and/or students generate more than one contextualized example for the word and, where appropriate, nonexamples of the word's usage and/or meaning.

N Not observed

E. 0 All vocabulary instructional activities are teacher-directed and present words in isolation.

1 Vocabulary instructional activities provide words in context but do not include discussions about the words or their usage.

2 Vocabulary instructional activities show the relationships among words and provide students multiple opportunities to practice saying, using, and discussing words.

 N Not observed

V. Comprehension Instruction

A. 0 The teacher assigns or begins reading assignments without assisting students in previewing the text or the important ideas.

1 The teacher provides a list/overview of concepts that will be encountered in a reading assignment but does not engage students in a discussion about those ideas.

2 The teacher and students spend time discussing their opinions and prior learning about important concepts before those ideas are encountered in the reading assignment.

 N Not observed

B. 0 If students read in class at all, they are engaged in round-robin reading with no opportunities for discussion.

1 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently), but have few or no opportunities to discuss their developing understanding.

2 Students are provided different methods of reading text (partner reading, teacher modeling, reading silently) with many opportunities to discuss the material with the teacher and other students.

 N Not observed

C. 0 During reading, the teacher conducts all the questioning with literal-level questions or has students complete worksheets.

1 During reading, the teacher asks questions that are primarily geared toward getting only the facts from the reading (literal-level questions).

2 During reading, the teacher structures multiple means to assist students in monitoring their comprehension by:

- Locating text evidence to support or refute opinions about the concepts
- Asking: "What is the author trying to tell us about this information?"
- Having students generate main idea statements
- Having students generate their own comprehension questions at differing levels of complexity

 N Not observed

D. 0 After reading, students answer the questions at the end of the chapter or complete assignments that require students only to get the facts from the text. There are few opportunities for students to share their thinking about the text.

1 After reading, the teacher asks questions to check students' comprehension, but students do not have multiple opportunities to discuss their thinking or return to the text.

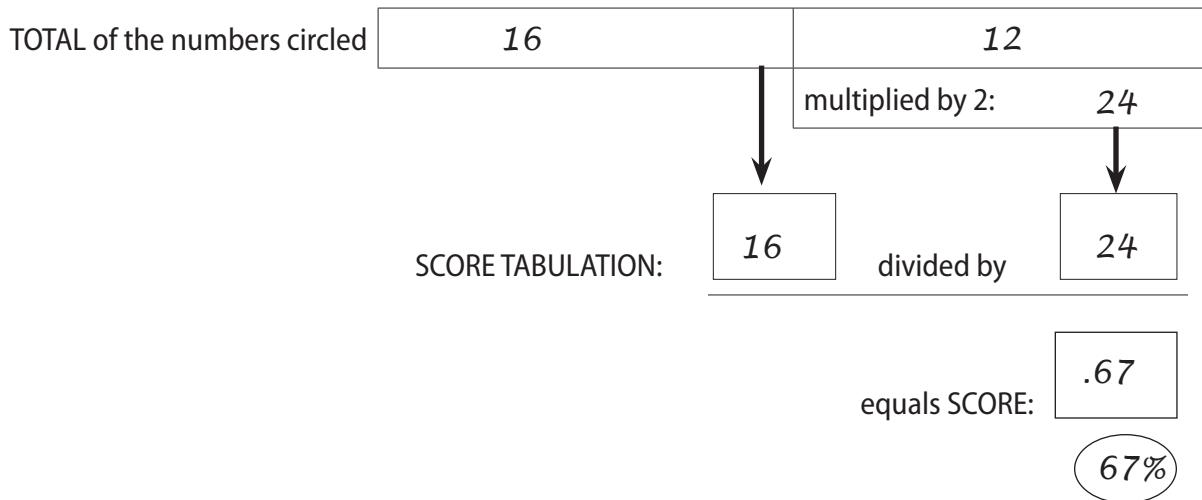
2 After reading, the teacher structures multiple means to discuss students' thinking about the text and to check their comprehension by:

- Having students generate summaries
- Having students use graphic organizers to record ideas
- Having students return to anticipatory or prediction statements to change or verify responses
- Having students ask each other self-generated comprehension questions of differing levels of complexity

 N Not observed

Sample Scoring Guide: Reading Intervention

Category	Sum of Scores (circle one)	# of Elements Observed (circle one)
I. Word ID Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 <u>5</u> 6 7 8 9 10	0 1 2 3 <u>4</u> 5
II. Fluency Instruction	0 1 2 3 <u>4</u>	0 1 <u>2</u>
III. Effective Instruction	0 1 2 3 4 5 6 <u>7</u> 8 9 10 11 12	0 1 2 3 4 5 <u>6</u>
IV. Vocabulary Instruction	<u>0</u> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	<u>0</u> 1 2 3 4 5
V. Comprehension Instruction	<u>0</u> 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	<u>0</u> 1 2 3 4



Score Interpretation

80% to 100% High implementation of TALA instructional routines

60% to 79% Partial fidelity to TALA instructional routines

Less than 60% Low fidelity to TALA instructional routines

SCORE INTERPRETATION adapted from:

Bryant, D. P., Vaughn, S., Linan-Thompson, S., Ugel, N., Hamff, A., & Hougen, M. (2000). Reading outcomes for students with and without reading disabilities in general education middle-school content area classes. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 23(4), 238–252.

Vaughn, S., Hughes, M. T., Schumm, J. S., & Klingner, J. K. (1998). A collaborative effort to enhance reading and writing instruction in inclusive classrooms. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 21, 57–74.

Web-based Resources for Schoolwide Approaches

Planning Intervention and Evaluating Reading Programs

[**www.stupski.org/publications/Secondary_Literacy_Instruction_Intervention_Guide.pdf**](http://www.stupski.org/publications/Secondary_Literacy_Instruction_Intervention_Guide.pdf)

Implementing a Progress Monitoring System

[**www.studentprogress.org/summer_institute/inst2006.asp#SupportingTeacherswhoareImplementingStudentProgressMonitoringAGuideforAdministrators**](http://www.studentprogress.org/summer_institute/inst2006.asp#SupportingTeacherswhoareImplementingStudentProgressMonitoringAGuideforAdministrators)

Progress Monitoring Data Management

[**www.jimwrightonline.com/php/chartdog_2_0/chartdog.php**](http://www.jimwrightonline.com/php/chartdog_2_0/chartdog.php)

Supporting School Change

[**www.reinventingeducation.org/RE3Web**](http://www.reinventingeducation.org/RE3Web)

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