

Detailed “Look Fors” for Conducting Walk-throughs During Comprehensive Reading Program Instruction

Center on Teaching and Learning, University of Oregon

Look For	Rationale	Questions/Suggestions
Teacher calls for group responses when appropriate.	This gives more students the opportunity to respond and helps keep students engaged in the lesson. The number of opportunities that students have to respond is a variable that is correlated with student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways could you give students more opportunities to respond to your questions and increase practice opportunities? • What may be some ways to increase student engagement in your classroom?
When calling for a group response, the teacher uses a clear signal. All signals should include (a) a direction (e.g. “Say each word as I touch it.”), (b) a pause for think time, and (c) a clear visual and/or verbal signal for students to respond.	Allows participation by all students, just not the higher performers. Without a signal, higher-performing students are likely respond long before lower-performing students. The lower-performing students may learn to copy responses from other students or simply not answer. This leads to a reduction in the amount of practice these lower-performing students receive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all students in your classroom have an equal opportunity to respond to your questions? • If not, how could you make that happen?
Partner reading and responses are occurring in every room.	Partner responses and partner reading are other ways to actively engage students during instruction. This also gives all students more opportunities to practice the skills being taught in a lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways could you give students more opportunities to respond to your questions and increase practice opportunities? • What may be some ways to increase student engagement in your classroom?
<p>Transitions between tasks or between locations are consistently quick, quiet, smooth and efficient.</p> <p>The teacher has a clear routine for transitions, and the students know it.</p> <p>The teacher actively manages transitions</p>	The longer it takes students to transition into and out of instructional activities, the more time is lost from instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What routines have you taught your students to make transitions smooth and quick? • How might you reduce the amount of time it takes your students to move from one classroom to another or one activity to another in order to save instructional time? • Have you ever thought about setting goals for your class to reduce the amount of time it takes to transition between activities in your classroom? A timer may be helpful for this process.

The teacher uses an appropriate teaching pace.	Lively pacing keeps students attentive and avoids downtime. Remember to provide a brisk pace without students feeling rushed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you ever feel as though you are “losing” students as the lesson progresses? • What are some ways you could keep students more actively involved in the lesson?
The teacher monitors student performance by watching the students’ eyes and mouths as they respond. S/he switches from student to student to monitor the entire class, but gives more monitoring attention to lower-performing students.	When a group of students respond orally, it will generally be quite difficult for the teacher to hear mistakes made by only one or two of the students. By watching their mouths, you can determine if children have positioned their lips and tongue in the position necessary to produce the desired response. You should also watch the eyes of the students to determine if they are attentive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you determine if individual children are answering correctly when asking for group responses? • How do you know students are mastering the material as you teach? • Are there any particular students that may require more monitoring than others? How can you make that happen?
The teacher provides immediately error correction for all student errors using a procedure such as model, lead, test, firm up, and delayed test.	The goal of this correction procedure is to enable all students to master all the content as they progress from task to task and lesson to lesson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percentage of student errors do you think you are catching? • What procedure are you using for correcting students’ errors? Do you model the correct response when an error occurs? Do you provide a delayed test on the missed item later in the lesson?
Teachers adhere to the fidelity of the five big ideas by prioritizing critical skills in lesson plans.	Instructional materials in the comprehensive reading program often include more activities than can be presented in the reading block. Research indicates that prioritizing instruction on the five essential components of reading instruction is critical to literacy development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With so many instructional activities provided for one day’s lesson in the Teacher’s Manual of the comprehensive reading program, how do you decide what activities/instruction to use? • How can you be sure to include the activities most essential to skill development, such those related to the five big ideas?
* Students needing more practice on specific skills are given that practice. Re-teaching and/or pre-teaching of critical skills to target students occurs on a daily basis.*	Students differ in the number of practice opportunities required to master specific skills. Many students need extra practice opportunities in order to master skills being taught. (This includes all students who are not at benchmark level.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For students who are having difficulty with learning particular skills being taught from the comprehensive reading program, how do you provide extra practice opportunities for them to master these skills? • Does pre-teaching and/or re-teaching for these students occur on a daily basis? If not, how can I help you build this into your schedule?

<p>*Small group instruction during the minimum, 90-plus-minute, reading block is differentiated and matched to students' specific instructional needs.*</p>	<p>To get the most use out of small group instruction, instruction should be focused on specific, data-determined needs of each group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information do you use to determine the focus of small group instruction for various groups within and outside the 90-minute reading block?
<p>*When introducing a new sound, new strategy, etc., in the comprehensive reading program, the teacher does so with explicit instructional methods including explicit modeling with multiple examples, guided practice (teacher and students together), and only then providing independent practice.* (The Teacher's Manual does not always provide instruction explicitly or provide more than one example for modeling a skill.)*</p>	<p>An abundant amount of research indicates that <i>explicit</i> instruction in phonics produces significant benefits for students in kindergarten through 6th grade and for children having difficulty learning to read. This is in contrast to <i>implicit</i> instruction, which relies more on incidental learning. <i>Telling</i> the students how to do something is more important than <i>asking</i> when first teaching a new skill or strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy for teachers to inadvertently switch the instruction in a lesson to that which is more implicit without intending to do so. Do you feel you ever have difficulty with this? • What techniques could you use to make lessons even more explicit, especially for the struggling students in your classroom?
<p>The teacher uses a variety of ways for students to read, (including choral, CLOZE, whisper read and partner read) and avoids "round robin" reading.</p>	<p>Round robin reading provides too few practice opportunities for individual students and often leads to disengagement. Providing a variety of ways to read keeps students on task and engaged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How could you get more students actively engaged when reading the anthology (or story from other reading material)? • Have you ever thought about alternatives to the traditional round robin reading that occurs in your classroom? What might they be?
<p>The teacher focuses on the specific objectives addressed in the lesson and does not allow him/herself to get off track. S/he does not spend time on "spin off topics" which are not related to the teaching objectives.</p>	<p>Having lengthy discussions or asking multiple students for answers to open-ended questions only semi-related to the specific objectives of a lesson takes up valuable instructional time and often leaves insufficient time to get all students to mastery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's easy to get sidetracked by things that students bring up during a lesson. How can you ensure that students voices are heard in the classroom yet avoid side discussions that take up valuable instructional time?
<p>(For schools using lesson maps:) Teachers are following the lesson maps. Lesson maps are out, visible, and accessible.</p>	<p>The lesson maps help teachers understanding which areas of instruction should have priority when planning lessons and provide teachers with additional practice for struggling readers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you using the lesson maps on a consistent basis as designed? • What kind of assistance do you need in order to use them on a daily basis to plan and instruct? • I noticed quite a bit of downtime between instructional activities. How could you use/manipulate the lesson maps in order to decrease this downtime?

