Learning Walk Tool for Literacy

Introduction

Regional instructional implementation teams will work with identified schools and districts to provide targeted support in high-quality instructional materials, curriculum-based professional learning, and data-based decision-making. These teams collaborate with teachers, principals, district, and school sponsor leaders to ensure that all teachers and students have access to appropriate high-quality instructional materials, are equipped to use them effectively, and receive training and ongoing support to deliver instruction aligned to the science of reading with fidelity.

The Learning Walk Tool for Literacy is a tool used by instructional implementation teams to identify strengths and bolster literacy instruction across Ohio through learning walks, reflection, and action. The tool serves as a guide for the use of common language and a unified framework to:

- Recognize and support high-impact literacy practices.
- Identify strengths and opportunities for growth.
- Understand connections to curriculum-based professional learning.
- Promote coherence and consistency across classrooms and schools.
- Ensure all students receive effective daily literacy instruction.

Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports

To understand the role of the Learning Walk Tool for Literacy, it is helpful to consider Ohio's Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports framework. Within this framework, improved student outcomes result from the interaction between student learning components and adult implementation components.

- The student learning components represent the practices educators use to identify and respond to student needs, including universal screening, data-based decision-making, a continuum of supports, progress monitoring, and team-based problem-solving.
- The adult implementation components—shared leadership, professional capacity, and communication and collaboration—create the conditions that enable educators to implement evidence-based practices consistently, effectively, and sustainably.

The Learning Walk Tool for Literacy is designed to strengthen adult implementation systems by providing a structured way to observe and interpret literacy instruction in classrooms. It supports:

- A shared understanding of high-quality instruction
- Consistent use of high-quality instructional materials
- Identification of strengths and areas for growth

Scope

To ensure relevant, focused learning walks across a range of classroom settings, the implementation teams should consider instructional context, grade level, and intended learning outcomes of Core English Language Arts (ELA) instruction.

Each core action in the Learning Walk Tool for Literacy is an overarching practice that supports the implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). Each core action is further broken down into indicators that describe discrete, observable practices. When evaluating an indicator during a learning walk, it is important to determine the extent to which each of the associated "look-fors" are implemented.

The table below outlines when each core action should be observed, with ★ indicating the components that should be observed in all contexts.

CORE ACTION	CORE ELA	SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS
Core Action 1 HQIM Implementation ★	**Y**	
Core Action 2 Explicit, Systematic Instruction ★	**Y**	
Core Action 3 Student Engagement ★	**Y**	
Core Action 4 Word Recognition and Fluency	***If relevant to grade level***	Include all relevant indicators based on the grade-level scope and sequence. Note that some components (e.g., phonemic awareness) may not be applicable at all grade levels and should be marked as N/A when appropriate.
Core Action 5 Language Comprehension and Writing	**Y**	Include all applicable indicators as time permits.

BEFORE THE LEARNING WALK

Prior to the learning walk, instructional implementation teams will gather key contextual information about the high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) the school is utilizing. That information will include specific details around the particular lesson scheduled to be observed. Please see the Pre Learning Walk Protocol for the full instructions for gathering this information.

THE LEARNING WALK

Instructional implementation teams will actively collect evidence throughout the lesson observed using the "look-fors" under each indicator. Implementation team members should plan to spend about 15 minutes in each classroom. Instructional implementation teams should bring the information gathered in the Pre-learning Walk survey to ensure they know which materials and lessons they will be observing.

Using the four "look-fors" as a guide, observers will assign a score to each indicator based on the number of "look fors" observed. Instructional implementation teams also have the option to include notes for each core action. Notes should not include any identifiable information about teachers or students and should be limited in scope.

AFTER THE LEARNING WALK

After all learning walks in the building are completed, instructional implementation teams will meet to debrief, review data and identify patterns and trends in implementation. After the team debriefs, they should meet with building leadership to discuss observed implementation strengths

and opportunities for additional support. The team lead will confirm with building leadership that a more comprehensive report and support plan will be provided within a week. Please see the Post Learning Walk Protocol for the full instructions.

The scoring scale is defined below with examples provided:

SCORING SCALE

SCORE	WHEN TO USE	EXAMPLE
3 Fully Implementing	3-4 look-fors within a single indicator are implemented consistently.	Teacher begins the lesson with a review of prior content or skills, connects prior learning to the lesson's objective, prompts students to accurately recall or apply past learning, and the review of prior learning is focused and brief.
2 Mostly Implementing	2 look-fors within a single indicator are observed.	The teacher reviews previously taught content and connects it to the lesson objective, but one look-for is missing.
1 Somewhat Implementing	1 look-for within a single indicator is observed.	The teacher makes a reference to previously taught content, but no other look-fors are observed.
0 Not Yet Implementing	There was a clear opportunity during the lesson to implement the indicator, but no look fors are observed. The expected instructional practice is completely absent despite its relevance to the content, grade level, or lesson segment.	The teacher does not include any review, despite the lesson clearly building on prior learning.
N/A Not Applicable	This rating is used when an indicator is truly not relevant to the lesson's grade level, subject, or instructional focus. **Note: N/A is an acceptable score only for Core Actions 4 and 5.**	A fourth-grade teacher explicitly teaches students to read and spell multisyllabic words by breaking them down into meaningful parts (morphemes) and leads fluency practice. Since phonemic awareness is typically not a focus at this grade level, the phonemic awareness indicator would be marked as N/A, indicating it is not relevant for this lesson.
N/O Not Observed	The indicator may have occurred, but it was not observable during the learning walk. Marking N/O prevents inaccurate assumptions about instructional quality when limited time restricts what can be seen.	A review may have occurred earlier in the lesson, but it was not observable during the scheduled learning walk.

School Name/Room Number:_____

Start Time: _____a.m./p.m.

Core Action 1: HQIM Implementation ★

INDICATOR	LOOK-FORS	SCALE				N/A	N/O
1A. The lesson objective is clearly communicated and aligned to grade-level goals or student needs.	☐ Objective is posted and visible to all students in student friendly language. ☐ Teacher states the objective at the beginning of the lesson. ☐ Teacher revisits the objective at least once during instruction ☐ Lesson activities directly support the objective.	3	2	1	0		N/O
1B. Instruction follows a logical, coherent sequence that supports skill or concept development.	☐ Lesson progresses logically from simple to complex tasks and/or known to new information. ☐ Lesson follows the intended sequence of the instructional materials or framework. ☐ Lesson is broken into short, manageable segments. ☐ Transitions are efficient and instructionally purposeful.	3	2	1	0		N/O
1C. Instructional materials support the lesson's objective.	☐ HQIM are used. ☐ Materials align with the lesson's objective and student needs. ☐ Teacher adheres to the structure and pacing of instructional materials as intended. ☐ No unauthorized supplemental materials are used (e.g., materials promoting three-cueing or other materials not formally approved or adopted by the school or district).	3	2	1	0		N/O
ACTION 1 NOTES/ EVIDENCE (Optional)							

Core Action 2: Explicit, Systematic Instruction ★

INDICATOR	LOOK-FORS	SCALE				N/A	N/O
2A. The teacher includes review or reinforcement of previously taught material.	☐ Teacher begins the lesson with a review of prior content or skills. ☐ Teacher explicitly connects prior learning to the lesson's objective. ☐ Teacher prompts students to accurately recall or apply past learning. ☐ Review of prior learning is purposeful, focused, and brief.	3	2	1	0		N/O
2B. The teacher explicitly models the target skill or concept.	☐ Teacher provides a think-aloud, step-by-step demonstration, and/or worked example ("Watch how I break this word into syllables...") ☐ Language is clear, accurate, and focused on the learning objective. ☐ Examples and non-examples are used to clarify the target skill or concept. ☐ Teacher checks for understanding before moving on to guided practice.	3	2	1	0		N/O
2C. Students participate in guided practice with scaffolded support.	☐ Students work on tasks similar to the modeled example, with teacher support (e.g., solving additional problems using the same strategy, reading a similar passage, or completing a graphic organizer). ☐ Teacher monitors understanding and gives timely, corrective feedback (e.g., redirecting misconceptions, prompting rereading, suggesting revisions). ☐ Scaffolds and extensions are used to meet diverse learning needs (e.g., sentence frames, manipulatives, challenge prompts). ☐ Students show increased independence as support is gradually reduced.	3	2	1	0		N/O
2D. Students engage in independent practice aligned to the skills or concept modeled.	☐ Students work independently on tasks that mirror the modeled strategy or skill. ☐ Teacher prompts students to apply skills with minimal or no support. ☐ Work time is structured (e.g., clear routines, use of timers, visible expectations). ☐ Teacher monitors and responds to individual needs.	3	2	1	0		N/O
2E. The teacher concludes the lesson by reinforcing the objective and checking for understanding.	☐ Teacher prompts students to summarize or reflect on what they learned. ☐ Closure includes a formative assessment (e.g., exit ticket, oral response, written reflection). ☐ Teacher briefly clarifies lesson misunderstandings at the end of the lesson. ☐ Closure is purposeful and instructional—not just procedural (e.g., not just packing up or reviewing logistics).	3	2	1	0		N/O

ACTION 2 NOTES/ EVIDENCE (Optional)	

Core Action 3: Student Engagement ★

INDICATOR	LOOK-FORS	SCALE				N/A	N/O
3A. Students are actively engaged in the lesson.	☐ Teacher prompts students to participate verbally, in writing, or through reading. ☐ Engagement strategies promote all-student responses (e.g., turn and talk, choral response, whiteboards). ☐ Multiple, varied opportunities to respond are embedded throughout the lesson. ☐ Teacher supports and redirects students to maintain attention.	3	2	1	0		N/O
3B. The teacher provides actionable feedback that supports learning.	☐ Feedback is specific, timely, and relevant to the learning goal. ☐ Teacher addresses errors through clear explanations, modeling, or re-teaching when needed. ☐ Feedback emphasizes effort, strategy use, and/or accuracy—not just behavior. ☐ Teacher supports students in understanding and applying feedback.	3	2	1	0		N/O
ACTION 3 NOTES/ EVIDENCE (Optional)							

Core Action 4: Word Recognition and Fluency

INDICATOR	LOOK-FORS	SCALE				N/A	N/O
4A. Teachers engage students in phonological or phonemic awareness activities, as appropriate for student needs.	☐ Teacher leads oral language activities like blending and segmenting. ☐ Activities are brief and focused. ☐ Students respond chorally and/or individually. ☐ Tasks are matched to students' grade level (or targeted skill level).	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
4B. Phonics and word study instruction is explicit and systematic.	☐ Teacher directly teaches sound-spelling patterns, morphology, and/or decoding strategies to read single- or multi-syllable words. ☐ Teacher guides students to read words using taught patterns and/or decoding strategies. ☐ Teacher uses dictation procedures for students to spell words and write sentences using taught patterns. ☐ Teacher prompts students to read connected texts aligned to the targeted basic or advanced phonics pattern/concept.	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
4C. Teacher engages students in fluency practice with teacher feedback.	☐ Teacher models fluent reading (e.g., phrasing, intonation) before or during student practice. ☐ Teacher supports students to read a range of grade level texts aloud (e.g., repeated readings, partner reading, choral reading, echo reading). ☐ Teacher listens and provides feedback on accuracy, rate, and/or expression. ☐ Students read aloud chorally, with peers, or individually (as needed).	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
ACTION 4 NOTES/ EVIDENCE (Optional)							

Core Action 5: Language Comprehension and Writing

INDICATOR	LOOK-FORS	SCALE				N/A	N/O
5A. Vocabulary is explicitly taught and reinforced to build content knowledge.	☐ Teacher follows a consistent routine to explicitly introduce academic and domain-specific vocabulary. ☐ After reading, the teacher reviews key words and prompts students to use them in speaking and writing. ☐ Teacher intentionally exposes students to additional vocabulary during reading and discussion. ☐ Teacher prompts students to use context clues and/or word parts (e.g., roots, prefixes, suffixes) to determine word meanings.	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
5B. The teacher models and supports comprehension using complex texts to increase content knowledge.	☐ Students read and/or listen to complex texts that build knowledge around a topic or theme. ☐ Teacher explicitly models and supports students to use strategies to comprehend text. ☐ Teacher facilitates structured discussions that promote critical thinking and deep analysis. ☐ Teacher prompts students to provide text-based evidence in oral or written responses.	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
5C. Instruction supports writing through meaningful engagement with texts.	☐ Writing is explicitly taught through modeling and guided practice. ☐ Teacher provides scaffolds (e.g., sentence frames, graphic organizers) to help students organize, refine, and express their ideas. ☐ Students write to process, explain, analyze, or apply what they are learning about in content area texts (e.g., math explanations, science observations, argument in social studies, text analysis in ELA). ☐ Teachers provide structured opportunities for students to revise writing based on feedback and learning goals.	3	2	1	0	N/A	N/O
ACTION 5 NOTES/ EVIDENCE (Optional)							

End Time: _____a.m./p.m.