

APPENDIX 4A

Pocket Version of the “Look-Fors” for Key Ingredients of Effective Literacy Instruction

Active Ingredients	In Observation . . .
Reading Accurately with a Purpose	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You should be able to identify clear purposes for reading by doing the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examine the board or recent posters and anchor charts to see if there is a visual reminder of a goal or reason for reading. b. Ask students, “Why are you reading what you’re reading?” or “What made you choose this text?” c. Ask students what they will do as a result of their reading when they have finished it: “What will you be able to do/say/have when you have read this text?” 2. Find evidence that students had the opportunity to read accurately by doing the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Notice whether more than one text was available for students to read during some part of the lesson either because students were given several options, a set of texts, or a choice of what to read. b. Notice if students have opportunities to engage with the same text in more and less supported environments (whole group, small group, independently). c. Notice if students had the opportunity to read and reread a text that was read aloud if it was particularly challenging: repeated reading of a challenging text, when supported by a model, indicates an investment in developing accuracy despite text complexity.
Writing with a Purpose and Audience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both teachers and students reference a specific person or group (audience) when making decisions about what to write and how to represent ideas using words, sentences, and punctuation. Students should be able to fill in this blank: I/we are writing to ____ because/in order to ____. 2. The format of the writing task matches the stated purpose and audience every time, whether students are writing to demonstrate what they know about content, or writing in the context of a lesson focused on the writing process. 3. There is a balance between language and literature objectives within and across lessons to be sure students have both the <i>what</i> and the <i>why</i> of composition. If you see teachers addressing only one or the other, you might ask about when this will be balanced out in upcoming lessons.

Talking About Text with Teachers and Peers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students have the opportunity to engage in back-and-forth discussions with the teacher (in a conference) or with peers (in small- or whole-group settings) that focus on something they wrote or read. 2. When students are talking in class, they are talking about texts they are preparing to read/write or in the process of reading/writing. 3. Teachers and students can name examples of discussions they have had, either individually or in groups, about the texts they are reading or writing this week. Evaluators that see reading/writing in progress might ask, “Have you gotten to talk to someone about this piece yet? Do you think you will?”
Discussing Models of Fluent Reading and Expert Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers name and narrate what they are doing and why as they engage in reading or writing in front of students (model). They may leave a visual reminder of the processes they demonstrate, as steps, directions, reminders, or anchor charts to which students may refer. However, these charts cannot exist in isolation: their contents also require live demonstration and opportunities for student practice. 2. Descriptions of all steps of the writing process and exemplars of informal writing are outlined on anchor charts or other visual reminders. These are then demonstrated by teachers and practiced by students. 3. Students can describe or reference lists of criteria for success as readers and writers (e.g., what expert readers do, what expert writers do, what “we” are working toward).
Interventions That Support Individuals and Focus on Meaning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are grouped according to specific individual needs. 2. Students receive frequent, explicit coaching and feedback from someone who can identify difficulty and address it specifically. 3. Students regularly apply their skills to texts that carry meaning, which are selected by the teacher or student to ensure a good match for optimal practice. 4. Students are invited to discuss what they are doing, why, and how so that they not only perform but internalize the skills and strategies they will need for independent success.