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Literacy Look-Fors: An Observation Protocol to Guide K–6 Classroom

Walkthroughs

By Elaine K. McEwan-Adkins

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Literacy Look-Fors: An Observation Protocol to Guide K–6 Classroom Walkthroughs* by Elaine K. McEwan-Adkins. *Literacy Look-Fors* is a practical, research-based resource that addresses two of the biggest challenges facing elementary school literacy leaders today: (1) How can I acquire the knowledge I need to become an effective literacy leader? (2) How can I become more purposeful and focused in conducting classroom walkthroughs?

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or to focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by K–6 principals and other administrators to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to gain a solid understanding of how to assess and build instructional capacity, overcome roadblocks, develop targeted and embedded professional growth opportunities, and create a balanced literacy program to raise literacy levels.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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Chapter 1

Understand the Literacy Look-Fors

1. What are the literacy look-fors? What are the seven steps to successfully implementing look-fors and walkthroughs? What are the five categories of literacy look-fors?
2. What are instructional moves? What are the literacy look-fors for instructional moves? What is the big idea of instructional moves?
3. What’s the difference between an exemplar and a nonexemplar? What are some examples of teacher exemplars and nonexemplars of instructional moves? Can you think of teachers who fit into either of these categories?
4. What are teacher-managed instructional activities? What are the look-fors for this category? What is the big idea of teacher-managed instructional activities?
5. What are some examples of exemplars and nonexemplars of teacher-managed instructional activities? Can you think of teachers who fit into either of these categories?

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6. What are the components of teacher with-it-ness? What are the look-fors for this category? What is the big idea of teacher with-it-ness?
7. What are some examples of exemplars and nonexemplars of teacher with-it-ness? Can you think of teachers who fit into either of these categories?
8. What are student-managed learning activities? What are the look-fors for this category? What is the big idea of student-managed learning activities?
9. What are some examples of exemplars and nonexemplars of student-managed learning activities? Can you think of classrooms that fit into either of these categories?
10. What are classroom artifacts? What are the look-fors for this category? What is the big idea of classroom artifacts?
11. What are some examples of exemplars and nonexemplars of classroom artifacts? Can you think of classrooms that fit into either of these categories?

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Chapter 2

Understand the Classroom Walkthroughs

1. What are classroom walkthroughs? What three components do all walkthrough models have in common? What are the three components of the walkthrough model in this book?
2. Read the debriefing guidelines and confidentiality agreement in figure 2.2. What are the benefits of providing it to teachers? Have you provided something like this to your teachers?
3. Revisit the classroom walkthrough learning stems in figure 2.3. Have you used any of these to scaffold teacher dialogue after a teacher team walks through three classrooms together? Which ones will you try?
4. Read through and summarize the frequently asked questions from principals about classroom walkthroughs. Have you had similar questions? What other questions do you have?
5. What’s the benefit of using a data collection form like that in figure 2.4? How can you incorporate it into professional development sessions with teachers?

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6. Revisit figure 2.5. How big is your school? How long should a walkthrough last per its length?

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Chapter 3

Assess Your Instructional Leadership Capacity

1. What is instructional leadership capacity? How would you characterize yours? What are the three components of strong instructional leadership for literacy?
2. What are some of the important questions to ask yourself as you contemplate implementing the literacy look-fors and walkthroughs in your school? Which question will you have the hardest time addressing?
3. What is the first source of teacher pushback you might experience? Why do some teachers react this way? What paradigms need to shift if you and your staff are going to make a lasting impact on literacy achievement for all students?
4. What is the second source of teacher pushback you might experience? Why do some teachers react this way?
5. How can the instructional behavioral checklist (figure 3.2) and the assertive administrator self-assessment (figure 3.3) be used to provide some insight as to your *real* job description? Use figure 3.2 to self-assess and evaluate your instructional leadership.

Chapter 4

Orient Your Faculty to the Look-Fors and Walkthroughs

1. What are the most common roadblocks to a successful implementation of the literacy look-fors and walkthroughs? How does each of these roadblocks apply to the culture and climate of your school? Which must be strategically dismantled or circumvented to keep your implementation moving forward?
2. What are three meetings to provide for the teacher orientation of the look-fors and walkthroughs? Briefly describe their components.
3. What are the handouts you can use to orient your faculty? What are the two choices you have when it comes to preparing handouts for faculty orientation? What are the pros and cons of each, and which one will you choose?
4. What is the agenda for orientation meeting #1? What handouts will you use during the first meeting? Review the school literacy program assessment (figure 4.2). What are the indicators of a strong literacy program? How do you think your school will score?
5. What is the agenda for orientation meeting #2? What is the affinity process? How will the affinity process diagram (figure 4.3) help to organize and address instructional concerns?

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6. What two group processes might you use with orientation meeting #3? What are the components of each?

7. What are the standards to ensure your faculty will build and maintain respectful, collaborative, and professional relationships? What attitudes and behaviors should you and your faculty exhibit? What are the steps of the professional standards process?

8. What is the process for the force field analysis? Review the Force Field Analysis Worksheet (figure 4.7), and generate a list of facilitating (positive or driving) forces that will help the team to solve the problem. What forces will help your faculty to make the needed change?

Chapter 5

Collect and Analyze Look-For Frequency Data

1. What are the three components of the data collection process? How will a checklist, like the one in figure 5.1, help you to collect your data? What's the benefit of using a heuristic process to analyze your data?
2. What does the data aggregation checklist for Desert Springs School (figure 5.2) say about the school's instructional capacity? What is the conclusion you can make about the school's teachers? How does this school compare to your school?
3. In regard to the case study of Desert Springs School and your own experience, does the presence of a specific artifact indicate a teacher's *use* of the artifact to increase student learning, or does it merely indicate *compliance*, without building connections to students learning?
4. What three aspects could account for the low frequency of scaffolding in Desert Springs School? Consider how these three aspects could affect your school.
5. What are the five possible reasons for the low achievement at Greentree School? Do you have any of these factors in your own school? How would you address them?

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6. What is the benefit of using a customized set of literacy look-fors (see figure 5.3) focused on the direct instruction of reading comprehension strategies to collect baseline data? What does the data aggregation checklist for Greentree School (figure 5.4) say about the school’s walkthroughs? What is the conclusion you can make about the school’s teachers?

7. What are some of the reasons aside from walkthroughs that you may visit classrooms? Have you visited classrooms for these reasons? Reflect on your classroom experience.

8. Why is the idea that principals could and should visit every classroom in their schools every day an unrealistic expectation? What does the author suggest for principals to invest their energy in? What sorts of meetings does she recommend that you make regular visits to? Why?

Chapter 6

Develop, Implement, and Assess Embedded Professional Development

1. What are the problems that embedded professional development for collaborative teacher teams address that generic professional development cannot address? What are the six phases of implementation that are critical to success? What are the challenges of each?
2. What are the handouts you need to model the unpacking process? What is the challenge of modeling the unpacking process? Review figures 6.2 through 6.4. What strategies will you use for modeling unpacking a look-for?
3. How can the presentation techniques in figure 6.5 and the lesson template in figure 6.6 show teachers that the unpacked look-for reveals far more than its definition conveys? How can you use these tools in your own school?
4. What is the benefit of the Teacher Team Goal-Setting Worksheet in figure 6.7? What is the process of using this worksheet and the action log in figure 6.8?
5. How can you determine if your instructional capacity is building across your school as a result of embedded professional development and increased academic focus resulting from grade-level goals? What will you hope to see as a result of these six phases?

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Chapter 7

Use Team Walkthroughs to Build School Capacity

1. What is the most exciting step in your school’s implementation of the literacy look-fors and walkthroughs? Why? What will you be doing during this step?
2. What are some of the challenges of grade-level literacy walkthroughs? Which challenge will be toughest for you and your school?
3. How can you prep teachers for classroom walkthroughs? What are the benefits of having agreed-upon guidelines and a professional standards code?
4. What is the principal responsible for doing during the debriefing session of a classroom walkthrough? How can learning stems be used during this process?
5. After you’ve completed the seven steps, what steps does the author recommend you repeat? What are the three roadblocks that can hold you and your staff back? What does the author suggest can help you to overcome them?