Fine-tuning Classroom Observations
Focusing on the Academic Language Behaviors of ELL students

CSA Leadership Series
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Today’s Objective:

Fine-tune how we Observe English Language Learners using Academic Language as they interact with Text, Classmates and the Teacher to effectively assess learning expectations, student progress, and teacher effectiveness.

Today’s session offers some suggestions on how to observe these behaviors towards improving both teaching and learning.
What are Academic Language Behaviors?

Academic Language behaviors are the actions that ELL students perform in the classroom that demonstrate their understanding of content through listening, speaking, reading and/or writing.

Practice in the four modalities ensures the development of English proficiency and the acquisition of content knowledge.
Observing ELLs in the Classroom

What do these behaviors reveal about how and what these students are learning?

What texts are they using? How are they interacting with these texts? What’s the language modality?
The study of English as a Second Language separate from classroom readings - literary, information and content texts is no longer enough to prepare ELLs for the demands of the CCLS.

The Text takes center stage with the CCLS. Therefore, we need to teach English in a much more integrated manner.
ELA/Literacy Shift 1: Balancing Informational and Literary Text

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<th>What the STUDENT Does...</th>
<th>What the TEACHER Does...</th>
<th>What the PRINCIPAL Does...</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Build background knowledge to increase reading skill</td>
<td>• Teach “through” and “with” informational texts</td>
<td>• Hold teachers accountable for building student content knowledge through text</td>
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<td>• Exposure to the world through reading</td>
<td>• Scaffold for the difficulties that informational text present to students</td>
<td>• Provide PD and co-planning opportunities for teachers to become more intimate with non fiction texts and the way they spiral together.</td>
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<td>• Apply strategies to reading informational text.</td>
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ELA/Literacy Shift 2: 6-12 KNOWLEDGE IN THE DISCIPLINES

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<td>• Become better <strong>readers</strong> by building background knowledge</td>
<td>• Shift identity: “I teach reading.”</td>
<td>• Support and demand the role of <strong>all teachers</strong> in advancing students’ literacy</td>
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<td>• Infer, like a detective, where the <strong>evidence</strong> is in a text to support an argument or opinion</td>
<td>• Stop referring and summarizing and start reading</td>
<td>• Give teachers <strong>permission</strong> to slow down and deeply study texts with students</td>
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<td>• See the <strong>text itself as a source of evidence</strong> (what did it say vs. what did it not say?)</td>
<td>• Ask: “How do you know? Why do you think that? Show me in the text where you see evidence for your opinion.”</td>
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### ELA/Literacy Shift 3: STAIRCASE OF COMPLEXITY

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<td>• Read to see what more they can find and learn as they <strong>re-read</strong> texts again and again</td>
<td>• Engage students in <strong>rigorous conversation</strong></td>
<td>• Ensure that complexity of text <strong>builds from grade to grade</strong>.</td>
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<td>• Read material at <strong>own level to build joy of reading and pleasure in the world</strong></td>
<td>• Give students <strong>less to read</strong>, let them <strong>re-read</strong></td>
<td>• Allow and encourage teachers to build a <strong>unit</strong> in a way that has students scaffold to more complex texts over time</td>
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<td>• Be persistent despite challenges when reading; good readers <strong>tolerate frustration</strong></td>
<td>• Use <strong>leveled texts</strong> carefully to build independence</td>
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ELA/Literacy Shift 4: TEXT-BASED ANSWERS

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<th>What the PRINCIPAL Does...</th>
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<td>• Go back to text to find evidence to <strong>support their argument</strong> in a thoughtful, careful, precise way.</td>
<td>• <strong>Facilitate evidence based conversations</strong> with students, dependent on the text.</td>
<td>• Provide planning time for teachers to engage with the text to prepare and identify appropriate text-dependent questions.</td>
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<td>• Develop a <strong>fascination with reading</strong></td>
<td>• Identify questions that are text-dependent, worth asking/exploring.</td>
<td>• Create working groups to establish common understanding for <strong>what to expect from student writing</strong> at different grade levels for text based answers.</td>
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<td>• Create own <strong>judgments and become scholars</strong>, rather than witnesses of the text.</td>
<td>• <strong>Spend much more time preparing for instruction by reading deeply.</strong></td>
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Observing how English Language Learners use Academic Language in the Classroom
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<th>CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>DOK Level 1: RECALL</th>
<th>DOK Level 2: SKILLS &amp; CONCEPTS -Application &amp; Literal meanings-</th>
<th>DOK Level 3: STRATEGIC THINKING</th>
<th>DOK Level 4: EXTENDED THINKING</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELLs remain silent most of the time. They are asked one-word Questions and do Level 1-type Tasks, e.g. label, match, color. They usually write simple sentences or follow prompts.</td>
<td>ELLs tend to be asked to follow specific steps, respond to literal questions. Expectations usually below grade level, even if they use the four language modalities.</td>
<td>ELLs understand, &amp; express lesson objectives. They are aligned to the CCLS. Teacher provides effective scaffolds to help meet objectives. Students use the four language modalities.</td>
<td>Builds on Level 3. The classroom environment includes structures that foster students’ responsibility as learners.</td>
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Observing how ELLs use Academic Language in the classroom

Practice

You will observe and respond to a variety of classroom situations working with a partner.

The purpose of the questions is to help you observe the use of academic language and the level of rigor in a classroom as you collect evidence to assess teaching effectiveness.

You may want to use the following handouts:
- DOK Level Prompts
- Question Stems based on English proficiency
- Types of Questions
Resources: Observing how ELLs use Academic Language in the classroom

DOK Question Stems

- **DOK 1**
  - Can you recall _____?
  - When did _____ happen?
  - Who was _____?
  - How can you recognize _____?
  - What is _____?
  - How can you find the meaning of _____?
  - Can you recall _____?
  - Can you select _____?
  - How would you write _____?
  - What might you include on a list about _____?
  - Who discovered _____?
  - What is the formula for _____?
  - Can you identify _____?
  - How would you describe _____?

- **DOK 2**
  - Can you explain how _____ affected _____?
  - Why would you apply what you learned to develop _____?
  - How would you compare _____?
  - Contrast _____?
  - How would you classify _____?
  - How are _____ similar? Different?
  - How would you classify the type of _____?
  - What can you say about _____?
  - How would you summarize _____?
  - What steps are needed to edit _____?
  - When would you use an outline to _____?
  - How would you estimate _____?
  - How could you organize _____?
  - What would you use to classify _____?
  - What do you notice about _____?

- **DOK 3**
  - How is _____ related to _____?
  - What conclusions can you draw _____?
  - How would you adapt _____ to create a different _____?
  - How would you test _____?
  - Can you predict the outcome of _____?
  - What is the best answer? Why?

- **DOK 4**
  - Write a thesis, drawing conclusions from multiple sources.
  - Design and conduct an experiment. Gather information to develop alternative explanations for the results of an experiment.
  - Write a research paper on a topic.

Questioning Techniques for English Language Learners

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Students</th>
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<td>Level 1: Beginning Oral Questioning</td>
<td>Point to the _____ stay.</td>
<td>Yes/No questions, Either/Or questions, One or two word response questions.</td>
<td>Literacy questions, Questions that generate a list of words.</td>
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<td>Level 2: Early Intermediate Oral and Written Questioning</td>
<td>Tell me about _____ stay.</td>
<td>Yes/No questions, Either/Or questions, One or two word response questions.</td>
<td>Literacy questions, Questions that generate a list of words.</td>
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<td>Level 3: Intermediate Oral and Written Questioning</td>
<td>Explain _____ stay.</td>
<td>Yes/No questions, Either/Or questions, One or two word response questions.</td>
<td>Literacy questions, Questions that generate a list of words.</td>
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Observing English Language Learners in the Classroom

1. What was the teacher’s topic? (Use the index on the left)
2. What open-ended questions did the teacher ask?
3. What is a language learning opportunity in content areas?
PRACTICE:

1. What might be the task? (Topic: Living in the Snow)
2. What are some questions that the teacher may ask?
3. What feedback is the teacher likely to provide?
4. How is language learning connected to content acquisition?
PRACTICE:

1. What might be the task? (Topic: Living in the Snow)
2. What are some questions that the teacher may ask?
3. What feedback is the teacher likely to provide?
4. How is language learning connected to content acquisition?, what is different between ‘a’ and ‘b’?
PRACTICE:

1. What might be the task? (Topic: Living in the Snow)
2. What are some questions that the teacher may ask?
3. What feedback is the teacher likely to provide?
4. How is language learning connected to content acquisition?
What is the most effective classroom environment Why?

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<th>Observing English Language Learners in the Classroom</th>
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<td>1. What might the task be? (Viewing the frame)</td>
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What are some effective text-based strategies that promote Academic Language behaviors in ELLs?

Reading:

- Anchor the learning to build students’ confidence (what I know)
- Incorporate Language Objectives and Language Frames into the lesson.
- Elicit evidence - examples, visuals, non-examples, to help students understand the meaning of new words before providing a formal definition (Frayer Model) - a great way to incorporate technology.
- Use close reading to read the same text several times, for different purposes. Make effective use of Text-based questions and DOK levels.

Writing:

- Extend students’ thinking and knowledge by returning to completed tasks to extend familiar concepts and/or to review and enrich prior written assignments, e.g. prior unit written work.

Reading and Writing

- Foster students’ responsibility as learners with student-friendly rubrics, independent reading logs, and the purposeful teaching of learning strategies, including the use of Google translate.
How do we incorporate these concepts into our Informal Observations?
We’re visiting a 4th grade class with ELL students

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How can these ELL students read and understand such complex text?

Zlateh the Goat by Isaac Bashevis Singer

The snow fell for three days, though after the first day it was not as thick and the wind quieted down. Sometimes Aaron felt that there could never have been a summer, that the snow had always fallen, ever since he could remember. He, Aaron, never had a father or mother or sisters. He was a snow child, born of the snow, and so was Zlateh. It was so quiet in the stillness. Aaron and Zlateh slept all night and a good part of the day. His dreams were all about warm weather. He dreamed of green fields, trees covered with blossoms, clear brooks, and singing birds. By the third night the snow had stopped, but Aaron did not dare to find his way home in the darkness. The sky became clear and the moon showed, Aaron dug his way out and looked at the world. It was all white, quiet, of heavenly splendor. The stars were large and close. The moon swam in the sky as in a sea. (Source: CCLS, Appendix B, Grades 3-4)

DO:

- Read the text closely before the visit
- As you read the text, think of individual students and ask yourself how you’d approach the text.
- Be prepared to observe the four language modalities and how students interact with the text.
LESSON: Practice using a grade 3 & 4 text

Content Objective:
By the end of this lesson, you and your partner will explain to each other the story of *Zlateh the Goat*, using details that you find in the text. Then, we will write our own story. (RL 3-4.1,2)

Language Objective:
Today, we will learn how words change when we talk about things that happened in the past.

For example,
I *am* 10 years old today, but before, I *was* a baby.

Academic Vocabulary in Context
- The snow *fell* for three days (line 1)
- ... the snow *had* always *fallen* (line 3)/ ...the snow *had stopped* (line 8)
- Sometimes Aaron *felt* that...(line 2)/ Aaron... *slept* all night (line 5)
- Aaron never *had* a father (line 3)/ Aaron *dug* his way out (line 10)
- Other verbs in the past: *rang, dreamed, became, swam*
What do you see?

How is the teacher approaching the text?
How do build background activities connect to the text?

How do the activities build academic language? What modalities kids’ use? What about the Language Objective the teacher has on the board? How are children using words in past tense?

Build Background

Role Playing

Visuals

Video clips

Text Investigation

R. Salavert - NYC RBE-RN, Fordham University
1. Purpose
How will the student demonstrate what he/she has learned at the end of this reading? (Main Idea? Vocabulary? Structure?...)

2. Entry Points
This is a difficult segment, how do the questions facilitate access to the meaning, i.e. are an entry point for the student based on their level of English proficiency?

3. Complexity of Text
How is the teacher crafting the questions to help the students learn the vocabulary? Identify the evidence? How is the teacher using Telling questions, particularly with Beginner and Intermediate ELL students?

5. Sequencing/Cascading:
Are the questions helping students go from concrete to higher level thinking? Are they crafted from DOK1 to DOK3/4?
Teaching the Strategy

Are students just going through the steps—close readings, finding evidence, answering questions, or are they also learning the strategy?

Can they explain why they do close readings, pause and reflect and look for evidence before a question?

Discuss:
You know how to navigate the NYC’s complex bus and subways system.

What steps did you take to gradually become comfortable with it?

What strategies did you use?

Discuss:
You are a whiz with your cell phone: you call, text, chat, use twitter, take pictures and more.

What steps did you take to gradually become comfortable with it?

What strategies did you use?
Today’s Objective:

Fine-tune how we **Observe** English Language Learners using **Academic Language** as they interact with **Text**, **Classmates** and the **Teacher** to effectively assess learning **expectations**, student **progress**, and teacher **effectiveness**.

**WHAT?**
*What do we look for when observing ELL students in the classroom?*

**SO WHAT?**
*What do we do with this evidence?*

**NOW WHAT?**
*What are some actions I will take as a result of what I have learned today?*

Please fill out the Feedback Form

*Thank you, Roser*