Multilingual Learner/English Language Learner (MLL/ELL) Classroom Observation Tool

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Gathering classroom observation data and assessing the implementation level of effective instructional practices in the school is critical to determining MLL/ELL program quality. Each school will determine how many classrooms will be visited to inform the MLL/ELL Program Quality Review. At least 33% of the classrooms should be visited. Those classrooms would be representative of the grade levels, courses, and programs offered in the school. All educators need to be knowledgeable about the daily practices for quality instruction for MLLs/ELLs. The Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction will be used in the MLL/ELL Program Quality review process. The Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction is anchored in six *Key Principles for ELL Instruction* elaborated by the *Understanding Language* initiative at Stanford University, which have informed the Blueprint for MLL/ELL Success. These rigorous, research-grounded principles will guide the review of practices within the classrooms, which will inform the scoring. These principles are applicable to *any* instructional program for MLLs/ELLs. No single principle is more important than any other, and all six need to be incorporated into planning and enacting instruction for MLLs/ELLs.

1. Learning is a social process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline.

2. MLLs/ELLs' home language(s) and culture(s) are regarded as assets and are used by the teacher in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge, and in making content meaningful and comprehensible.

3. Instruction that is rigorous and standards-aligned reflects the key shifts in new college- and career-ready standards. Such shifts require that teachers provide students with opportunities to describe their reasoning, share explanations, make conjectures, justify conclusions, argue from evidence, and negotiate meaning from complex texts. Students with developing levels of English proficiency will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.

4. Instruction moves MLLs/ELLs forward by taking into account their English proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences. MLLs/ELLs within a single classroom can be heterogeneous in terms of home language(s) proficiency, proficiency in English, literacy levels in English and student's home language(s), previous experiences in schools, and time in the U.S. Teachers must be attentive to these differences and design instruction accordingly.

> *These principles are derived from the 2012 Understanding Language Conference at Stanford University, which our Project Managers and senior staff co-authored foundational papers for and helped to convene and lead. These principles explicitly relate to teaching and learning of 21st-century college-and career-ready standards in English language arts and disciplinary literacy;*

5. MLLs/ELLs must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Tasks must be designed to ultimately foster student independence.

6. **Formative assessment practices are employed to measure students' content knowledge, academic language competence, and participation in disciplinary practices.** These assessment practices allow teachers to monitor students' learning so that they may adjust instruction accordingly, provide students with timely and useful feedback, and encourage students to reflect on their own thinking and learning.

These six principles, essential to rigorous teaching and learning for MLLs/ELLs, will help form the basis for the classroom review and will be used in tandem with MLL/ELL Classroom Observation Rubric to inform the scoring on the MLL/ELL Program Quality Review Continuum in alignment with the Blueprint for MLL/ELL Success and CR Part 154-2.

The Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction focuses the observations in the classroom on two areas: 1) a classroom environment support of academic discussion and writing, and 2) what student are saying and doing as they engage in learning. During a 20 minute observation the observers scan the classroom environment and circle what is evident using 7 categories (classroom set-up, interaction types, facilitation styles, social-emotional learning, extended academic discussions, culturally and linguistically relevant environment, and display of student writing). They make general observations related to the lessons/task, text or materials student are using by describing what they see. During the observation they focus on the students and record what they see students doing and saying in the *Evidence* column. They check boxes in the *Indicators* column in alignment to the evidence noted. In preparation for using the Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction observers should engage in a variety of activities including observing classrooms together or by using videos to build a common understanding of the effective MLL/ELL practices.

The Classroom Observation Rubric aims to identify school readiness in four major research-based categories of utmost importance within the classroom as they relate to the teaching of MLLs/ELLs, i.e., The Classroom Environment, Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, and Developing Autonomy. This rubric is to be used in conjunction with the data collected using the Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction.

The Classroom Environment focus is further subdivided into specific areas that need to be examined when working with MLLs/ELLs (i.e., classroom set-up, interaction types, facilitation styles, social-emotional learning, extended academic discussions, culturally and linguistically relevant environment, and display of student writing). By separating out each of the components related to creating an optimal classroom environment we are able to zero in on the areas that are strengths and those where more work would need to be done. This section requires that those collecting the data with the Classroom Observation Tool enter one of three responses related to each indicator: yes, it is evident, no, it is not evident and an additional write-in response. The indicators have been numbered for ease of the gathering of data.

The remaining categories--Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, and Developing Autonomy--have been constructed to identify the quality of or degree to which each of them is present in the classroom or school. These categories are followed by a leveling system from Level 4 being the highest to Level 1 being the lowest on the scale. The indicators are numbered to ensure ease of use.

Process for Aggregating, Summarizing, Analyzing Data from Classroom Observations

Tools

- ✓ **Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for ELL Instruction Paste Classroom Observation Form in PDF**
- ✓ **MLL/ELL Classroom Observation Rubric Paste PDF of Rubric**

After visiting a representative sample of classrooms in the school, the data collected from the Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction will be entered into the Classroom Observation Rubric. This can be done by the observers collectively.

A. The group first records the number of classrooms visited for 20 minutes each.

B. The group then records the data from each Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction by tallying the circled items in the classroom environment section for each specific area. They then make a summary statement for each area.

Summary Statement: In 20 classrooms teachers interacted with all students most of the time, in 2 of those classroom students had the opportunity to interact with a partner and in one classroom students interacted with a small group as well.

C. The remaining categories--Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, and Developing Autonomy--have been constructed to identify the quality of or degree to which each of them is present in the classroom or school. These categories are followed by a leveling system from Level 4 being the highest to Level 1 being the lowest on the scale. The indicators are numbered to ensure ease of use. The group records the data each indicator under each category in the Classroom Observation Form - Classroom Snapshot: Using the Key Principles for ELL Instruction Rubric. The group summarizes the evidence and the determines the level for each indicator.

Sample: 20 Classrooms Visited

Interaction Type	Yes	No
1. Teacher with all students	20	0
2. Teacher with small group	1	19
3. Students in pairs	2	18
4. Students in small groups	1	19
Other:		

Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1	Evidence	Level
1. All students **interact** with **key content-area** ideas, using analytical practices.	**Most** students **interact** with **key content-area** ideas, using analytical practices	**All** students **interact** with **key content-area** ideas, using analytical practices	**No, or very few** students **interact** with **key content-area** ideas, using analytical practices	1 of 20 classrooms	1
2. All students **make connections** among or between disciplinary concepts/ideas (e.g., synthesizing, explaining, generalizing, hypothesizing).	**Most** students **make connections** among or between disciplinary concepts/ideas (e.g., synthesizing, explaining, generalizing, hypothesizing).	**Some** students **make connections** among or between disciplinary concepts/ideas (e.g., synthesizing, explaining, generalizing, hypothesizing).	**No, or very few** students **make connections** among or between disciplinary concepts/ideas (e.g., synthesizing, explaining, generalizing, hypothesizing).	1 of 20 classrooms had students explaining	1
3. All students **make arguments** using evidence to **support reasoning** or claims.	**Most** students **make arguments** using evidence to **support reasoning** or claims.	**Some** students **make arguments** using evidence to **support reasoning** or claims.	**No, or very few** students **make arguments** using evidence to **support reasoning** or claims.	1 of 20 classrooms had students using evidence from text to justify	1
4. All students **engage** in **verbal interactions** focused on central **content-area** practices (e.g., analyzing, asking questions, elaborating, justifying, critiquing).	**Most** students **engage** in **verbal interactions** focused on central **content-area** practices (e.g., analyzing, asking questions, elaborating, justifying, critiquing).	**Some** students **engage** in **verbal interactions** focused on central **content-area** practices (e.g., analyzing, asking questions, elaborating, justifying, critiquing).	**No, or very few** students **engage** in **verbal interactions** focused on central **content-area** practices (e.g., analyzing, asking questions, elaborating, justifying, critiquing).	3 of 20 classrooms had students engaged in verbal interactions, 1 was focused on justifying	1
5. All students **engage** with **content materials** and learning tasks that are **rigorous**, and at grade level and aligned to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards.	**Most** students **engage** with **content materials** and learning tasks that are **rigorous**, and at grade level and aligned to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards.	**Some** students **engage** with **content materials** and learning tasks that are **rigorous**, and at grade level and aligned to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards.	**No, or very few** students **engage** with **content materials** and learning tasks that are **rigorous**, and at grade level and aligned to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards.	16 of 20 classrooms visited students were engaged with grade level instructional materials	3

Summary statements for Opportunity to Learn: In most classrooms, students are using grade level instructional material, although the lessons were not inviting them to interact verbally with the content area practices and use higher level thinking skills. Academic discourse (oral) was very limited. Most lessons were teacher directed with limited student talk.

For the leveled categories, you may find that the collected data will at times span throughout the levels. It is important to record each Classroom Observation entry to provide the most accurate picture of the experiences of MLLs/ELLs at the site. For example, should there be a spread of levels within an indicator, this may signal that this area has not been fully grasped by the site/teachers. Summarize the data on the rubric referencing back to the indicators.

IN PREPARATION AND IN SUPPORT OF YOUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN. ONCE THE DATA HAS BEEN SUMMARIZED ON THE RUBRIC YOU WILL FOLLOW THE PROCESS OUTLINED BELOW TO ANALYZE THE FINDINGS.

Process to Review and Analyze the Findings

As a group, identify which of the categories from the rubric will be your immediate areas of focus and discussion. You may determine this based on your site plan or based on areas of school/student needs that you have agreed to work on as a staff due to high investments you have made in professional development.

You will select for review and discussion at least two of the subsections under The Classroom Environment that show evidence that more work needs to be done. You will also select one of the leveled categories--Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, or Developing Autonomy--for a more in-depth analysis.

The Classroom Environment Process

Divide into two small groups, to review the data on the two classroom environment subsections.

(ALLOTTED TIME)

Each group will chart the findings based on the evidence provided on the rubric for one of the subsections.

The group will discuss each of the indicators within the subsection and make a list of reasons for the indicator not being evident. The group will then craft possible actions or solutions to address each indicator within the subsection and prepare to share out with the whole group.

The Classroom Environment Share-Out

(ALLOTTED TIME)

Each group will present to the other on their subsection.

- Identify the subsection and provide a brief summary of the discussion.
- Share a bulleted list of actions or solutions the group has proposed to address each indicator.
- Allow other participants to ask questions and add any recommendations.

After the group has shared the bulleted list of actions or solutions, have the whole group place a red dot on the action(s) they would prioritize (each person gets two dots).

Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, or Developing Autonomy Process

(ALLOTTED TIME)

Continue in small groups (can be reorganized) and repeat the process above for the leveled categories--Opportunities to Learn, Assets Orientation, or Developing Autonomy.

Finding Common Ground and Focus

(ALLOTTED TIME)

As a group, agree on the actions or changes that you will work on as a staff to address each of the indicators. Create a matrix with the areas to be addressed, the solution/actions posed, a timeline, resources needed and person(s) responsible for completion.

As a group you may agree to revisit classrooms at a later date to gauge progress.

Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction
Classroom Observation Form: Classroom Snapshot

Grade/Subject: _____   Number of Students: _____   Number of MLL/ELL Students: _____

The Classroom Environment		
Classroom Set-up	**Interaction Type(s)**	**Facilitation Style(s)**
• Students in rows • Students on the carpet • Students in table groups • Other:	• Teacher with all students • Teacher with small group • Students in pairs • Students in small groups • Other:	• Mostly teacher facilitated • Mostly student facilitated • Both teacher and student facilitated • Other:
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	**Extended Academic Discussions**	**Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Environment**
• Posted norms to promote positive interactions • Charts with examples of positive discourse and thinking moves • Other:	• Charts with academic conversation moves or language • Posted protocols or success criteria for effective group work • Other:	• Range and abundance of books • Culturally relevant literature • Bilingual books and media • Posters related to culturally relevant topics • Other:
Student Writing		
• Posted or observed student writing reflects deep learning about a topic or text • Posted or observed student writing reflects students' own ideas or perspectives about a topic or text • Posted or observed student writing reflects engagement in culturally relevant topics • Other:		
Other General Observations (Description of Lesson/Tasks, text in use, materials, etc.)**:**		

Using the Key Principles for MLL/ELL Instruction
Classroom Observation Form: Classroom Snapshot

Directions: Observe classroom interactions (teacher-student, student-student) and note the nature and degree of academic discussion, using the clustered principles and indicators below. Please note evidence using specific details.

Opportunities to Learn: Instruction provides MLLs/ELLs with opportunities to engage in discipline-specific practices to build conceptual understanding, analytical practices, and language competence simultaneously. Standards-aligned instruction for MLLs/ELLs is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds.	
Indicators: We can see…	**Evidence: If you check a box, note key details of what you saw & heard.**
☐ Students interacting around key content-area ideas, using analytical practices. ☐ Students engaged in verbal interactions focused on central content-area practices (analyzing, asking questions, elaborating, justifying, critiquing, etc.) ☐ Students making connections among or between disciplinary concepts/ideas (synthesizing, explaining, generalizing, hypothesizing) ☐ Students making arguments using evidence to support reasoning or claims ☐ Students' core materials/learning tasks are rigorous, at grade level ☐ Students engaged in grade-level core content aligned to *NYSED, New York State Next Generation P-12 Learning Standards*	
Asset Orientation: Instruction leverages MLLs'/ELLs' home language(s), cultural assets, and prior knowledge. Instruction moves MLLs/ELLs forward by taking into account their English proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences.	
Indicators: We can see…	**Evidence: If you check a box, note key details of what you saw & heard.**
☐ Students connecting and integrating ideas using language(s) (home and/or English), cultural assets, and prior knowledge	

Indicators: We can see…	Evidence: If you check a box, note key details of what you saw & heard.
☐ Students deepening understandings by building on prior knowledge/ideas or the ideas of others ☐ Students negotiating meaning using peers as resources ☐ Students using multimodal materials and scaffolds for purposeful learning of content, analytical practices, and language ☐ Students engaged in productive struggle with complex texts/tasks/ideas using learning supports and analysis tools for a purpose ☐ Students refining their communications using formulaic expressions, representations, metaphors, and multiple examples ☐ Students acknowledging and valuing the ideas of peers ☐ Students encouraging and/or promoting peers to express ideas in their home language	

Developing Autonomy: Instruction fosters MLLs'/ELLs' autonomy by equipping them with the strategies necessary to comprehend and use language in a variety of academic settings. Formative assessment practices are employed to gather evidence and guide (both teacher and students) productive next steps to support learning conceptual understandings, analytical practices, and language development simultaneously.

Indicators: We can see…	Evidence: If you check a box, note key details of what you saw & heard.
☐ Student engaged in well-structured invitations to participate in productive struggle ☐ Students engaged in productive struggle to accomplish tasks in the "zone of proximal development" ☐ Students apprenticing into content-area discussion ☐ Students offering peers respectful, accurate, and useful feedback ☐ Students making adjustments in learning tactics and language use in light of descriptive feedback received from peers or teacher.	