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A Reading Lesson Observation Framework for Elementary Teachers, Principals, and Literacy Supervisors

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This framework will provide reference points for assessment and help refine instructional practices in reading.

In recent years, school literacy practices have been the target of enormous public scrutiny. Some noted authorities believe that national attention to the reading ability of students and the way they are taught is unprecedented (Chall, 1998; Goodman, 1998; Strickland, 1998). Among the many reasons for this attention is the extensive

media coverage given to initiatives such as President Clinton's America Reads program and to major reports like those produced by the National Research Council (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Far more damaging, however, has been the media's fixation on the alleged failings of progressive literacy approaches in California (Routman, 1996), mediocre student scores on the reading tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Allington & Cunningham, 1996), and research from the National Institutes for Child Health and Human Development (Moats & Lyon, 1994). Collectively, the media paints a dark picture of literacy practices in U.S. schools.

This increased scrutiny has caused educators to become embroiled in heated public debates about the way reading should be taught (Braunger & Lewis, 1998). Classroom teachers, reading specialists, principals, and language arts supervisors often find themselves on the defensive. In fact, some state legislatures have gone so far as to disregard the voices of educators altogether by mandating the methodology teachers must use in their reading instruction (Jones, 1996; Resolution on Policy Mandates, 1998). In such a volatile environment, school districts need to demonstrate concretely that their efforts to teach children to read are maximally effective.

Communication, professional development, and accountability

One major threat to effective reading instruction in elementary schools is the limited amount of informed communication between colleagues (Church, 1996). School professionals often experience difficulty as they attempt to work together toward the identification and accomplishment of common literacy goals. Teachers rarely have the time to keep their knowledge base in reading current (Walmsley & Adams, 1993), so they look to administrators and supervisors for leadership. Unfortunately, principals and supervisory personnel typically have responsibilities that extend well beyond reading instruction. These additional responsibilities limit their ability to be proactive instructional leaders for those who directly teach reading. To compound matters, such time constraints often prevent supervisors from being fully up to date on current thinking about reading

instruction. They may be unable to stay abreast of innovative instructional themes, the most appropriate teaching techniques, or the newest materials. The net result is that those in literacy leadership roles may be incapable of supporting classroom practitioners adequately.

Clearly, communication between teachers of literacy and those who supervise them is paramount for achieving high standards in reading performance. As Braunger and Lewis (1998) suggested, "Ensuring excellent classroom instruction will take collaboration among professional staff, initially to agree upon goals for the literacy program and then to develop shared understandings of effective literacy practices" (p. 64). Without a mutual understanding of what must be accomplished and a common knowledge base of how it can be achieved, true success is not possible.

So, to be effective facilitators of reading instruction, teachers and administrators require structured opportunities to engage in dialogue with one another and in shared professional development activities (Henk & Moore, 1992). Such peer interaction and academic retooling are absolutely necessary for systemic change to occur within a district. In turn, when districts transform their reading instruction appropriately and children's performance improves as a result, public accountability issues diminish considerably.

In this article, we describe a structured yet informal and flexible reading lesson observation framework that addresses important peer communication problems, provides districts with a means to convey purposeful feedback to teachers about their reading instruction, and yields documented evidence of exemplary reading instruction. We begin by explaining the purpose and nature of the framework, then move to detailing its development and describing the instrument itself. The basic use of the framework is then outlined, adaptations are discussed, and some final thoughts about its benefits are shared.

About the Reading Lesson Observation Framework

The Reading Lesson Observation Framework (RLOF) is a tool that allows school districts to specify expectations for the functioning of teachers in daily reading lessons. In this way, the RLOF indirectly promotes the development of a shared philosophy of reading instruction and a set of common goals. The instrument encourages lesson continuity through the consolidation and highlighting of the major components and key aspects of a district's desired elementary level reading program. Equally important, the RLOF makes these expectations explicit for all stakeholders.

In many respects, the instrument builds upon the guidelines for reading and language arts programs developed by Vogt (1991). Unlike Vogt's checklist, which takes a longer view, the RLOF stipulates day-to-day, more immediate indicators of instructional efficacy. The rationale here is that by ensuring short-term quality control of reading lessons, overall programmatic quality will naturally follow. Put another way, superior reading lessons result in superior reading programs.

The use of a structured observation framework to evaluate teachers' reading instruction makes the process more meaningful, fair, and useful. Teachers know what will be expected of them, and supervisors know what they should expect to see. Figuratively speaking, the instrument forces teachers and supervisors to reach common ground on answers to the question what does outstanding reading instruction look like from the back of the room? More accurately, reading lessons are judged in terms of tangible criteria such as the quality of classroom literacy climates, basic lesson execution, explicit skill and strategy instruction, the selection of reading materials and tasks, and adherence to generally accepted principles of balanced reading instruction. The Reading Lesson Observation Framework appears in Figure 1 and is explained in greater detail following a brief account of its development and use in a local school district.

District development of the RLOF

The Reading Lesson Observation Frame work emerged in response to the needs of a very large, diverse public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania, USA. In general, the district wanted to enhance the caliber and consistency of literacy instruction across its many elementary schools. This task was challenging for several reasons. First, the district had a fair number of teachers, reading specialists, principals, and supervisors who could benefit from being updated in reading instruction. Second, the schools were distributed over an expansive geographic area which made communication and providing inservice training difficult. Finally, because the schools were set in suburban, urban, and rural contexts, the nature and needs of the student populations varied considerably.

In terms of literacy practices, schools in the district could be classified widely along a continuum of instructional innovation. While some schools represented exemplary models of balanced literacy instruction (Marinak & Henk, 1999), others lagged considerably behind. The district hoped to replicate the literacy practices of its most effective schools in all of its elementary buildings.

A survey of reading specialists and principals revealed that no districtwide curriculum existed beyond the scope and sequence of the basal reading series used in most of the buildings. The survey also confirmed that state-of-the-art instructional practices were not being implemented uniformly across sites. Also, while the reading specialists and principals reported partial satisfaction with some aspects of reading instruction such as the use of cooperative learning, they believed that considerable room for improvement existed.

Without a shared vision for reading instruction in the district, we needed a mechanism to communicate the major tenets of innovative, research-based practices throughout the system. Our thinking, building on the work of Yerger and Moore (1990), was that a reading lesson observation framework could provide a structure for emphasizing desired instructional practices to classroom teachers, reading specialists, principals, and literacy supervisors alike. The instrument would serve as a de facto set of guidelines for providing exemplary reading instruction in the elementary grades. No formal

mandating of the guidelines would take place. Instead, teachers and principals would come to understand, through inservice training and subsequent use of the instrument, that the framework represented the key criteria for gauging reading instruction. In other words, we believed that the observation framework could help to drive reading instruction.

A workshop approach

Our approach centered on first updating the reading specialists and principals about innovative literacy practices in order to create a common ground for both veteran and newer educators. We chose to use a workshop model in which each school's principal was teamed with the building's reading specialists. In the workshops, we used a mixture of lecture, discussion, simulation, and cooperative learning to address current literacy instructional goals and practices. As the organizer in Figure 2 indicates, we discussed balanced approaches to innovative literacy instruction, and dealt with issues related to materials, grouping practices, instructional themes, lesson components and modes, and selected instructional techniques. These topics were ones we had addressed previously in a major publication of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Marinak, Moore, Henk, & Keepers, 1998) and are consistent with the principles of effective reading instruction as described by Braunger and Lewis (1998); Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998); Morrow, Tracey, Woo, and Pressley (1999); and Duffy-Hester (1999). We then engaged the teams in creating an instrument for making classroom observations of reading instruction that were consistent with these agreed upon principles.

Knowing that effective change requires years of ongoing staff development and support, the RLOF remains a working document within the district. Teachers use it as a basic guidepost for their reading instruction. They recognize that the framework represents an organized set of recommended principles and practices that can lead to better reading instruction for their children. They also realize that it serves as a blueprint for their continued professional development since they can decide which components and aspects will be addressed in the future. The use of the RLOF by principals varies from school to school. Some use the document to frame their pre- and postlesson

discussions very generally, while others choose to use it in a more directed fashion. The formality of use is negotiated by the teachers and the principal.

The instrument

As Figure 1 illustrates, the Reading Lesson Observation Framework includes blanks for indicating the teacher being observed, the evaluator, the school year, the date of the observation, the observation number, and which phases of the lesson (i.e., before, during, or after reading) were witnessed.

In essence, the RLOF takes the form of a checklist with seven major components: (a) Classroom Climate, (b) Prereading, (c) Guided Reading, (d) Postreading, (e) Skill and Strategy Instruction, (f) Materials and Tasks of the Lesson, and (g) Teacher Practices. Under each component, a series of items are included that represent criteria for evaluating the component's various aspects. In all, there are a total of 60 items. A brief description of the components and key aspects follows.

- The *Classroom Climate* component deals with the physical setting, children's access to authentic reading materials, the provision of a designated reading area as well as an area for small-group instruction, active student engagement and social interaction, and practices that signify that literacy is valued and promoted.
- The *Prereading Phase* items include the encouragement of previewing, the activation of prior knowledge, the stimulation of interest, vocabulary instruction, the identification of genre and purposes for reading, the sharing of the lesson's objectives, and making instructional adjustments.
- For the *Guided Reading Phase*, the instrument focuses on predictions, questioning, fluency, teacher modeling and monitoring, metacognitive and word study strategies, and text structure recognition.
- In the *Postreading Phase*, items involve the confirming of predictions, retellings, critical judgments, application of new vocabulary, writing as an extension of reading, and continued teacher monitoring of student comprehension.

- *Skill and Strategy Instruction* centers on teacher explanations and modeling, explicit teaching, contextualization of skills, reading strategy use, and scaffolding.
- Factors associated with *Materials and Tasks of the Lesson* include considerations of ability and diverse learning needs, text and task authenticity, the nature of independent work, relevance, modes of reading, enjoyment, personal response, teacher/ student activity initiation, and thematic instruction.
- The *Teacher Practices* component includes a focus on meaning, the execution of recommended techniques, flexible grouping, sensitivity to diversity, student engagement, pace and flow of the lesson, safe failure, language arts integration, conferences, assessment, and curricular alignment.

For each item, the lesson observer can indicate one of four responses: Observed (O), Commendation (C), Recommendation (R), and Not Applicable (N). An O response indicates that the aspect was observed and judged to be of satisfactory quality. The C response denotes that the aspect was not only observed but also of very high quality. An R response is given when an appropriate aspect was either not observed or judged to be unsatisfactory. The N response means that the aspect was not observed, presumably because it was not pertinent to the lesson. The check-off boxes to the right of the instrument allow for easy use by the observer.

It is important to note that there should not be an expectation that every, or perhaps even most, aspects will be observed in a single lesson. The evaluation process, like the reading process, is a dynamic one in which the quality of the whole is not always reflected by the sum of its parts. In general, the more aspects marked as Commendations or as Observed, the greater the likelihood of a good lesson. However, good lessons might only include a small number of well-done aspects. This is very possible when observations focus on a single reading phase or instructional episode. By the same token, the observance of a large number of aspects is not an absolute guarantee that the reading lesson has been a good one. When observed aspects are extraneous or minimally acceptable, lesson quality could clearly suffer.

The framework attempts to be a fairly inclusive listing of possible desirable aspects. In this way, it gets at a range of aspects that observers might expect to see. For instance, in the Pre reading Phase, there is more than one possible way for a teacher to activate children's prior knowledge. Likewise, in the Postreading Phase, alternatives exist for children to demonstrate their comprehension. Because no list could hope to be fully inclusive, blank spaces are provided at the end of each component to allow observers to add appropriate aspects as needed.

In addition to the checklist format, the RLOF contains an open-ended Summary Sheet. Here the observer should address, in a narrative form, aspects of the components that were rated as Recommendations and Commendations. Clear explanations about aspects of the lesson that could have been improved are essential for good faith communication. By the same token, opportunities to praise teachers for their exemplary work should be documented richly as well. The observer should also comment and elaborate upon aspects that were rated as Observed if these have been absent in previous evaluations. Finally, the Summary Sheet should contain an overall evaluation of the reading lesson and should draw comparisons with previous observations. This synthesis is a very important part of the process.

Basic use of the RLOF

School districts today use a wide variety of supervision models to ensure that an instructional staff is meeting the academic needs of all learners. Regardless of a district's philosophical orientation to supervision (e.g., clinical versus organizational change), several overarching school leadership concepts should inform the instructional conversations between teachers and principals. These leadership concepts, including principal knowledge (Mohr, 1998), informed collaboration (Fullan, 1998), and skillful learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998), all lend credence to the desirability of a literacy framework such as the RLOF.

The most frequent use of the instrument will be by a principal or language arts supervisor observing a classroom teacher during a reading lesson. As with any planned observation of instruction, a preobservation and postobservation conference should take place

(Radencich, 1995). In the preobservation conference, the teacher can explain the context of the lesson to the observer. The teacher can begin by describing her or his basic approach to reading instruction and the accompanying philosophy that drives this style of teaching. The teacher should also specifically indicate how the upcoming lesson fits with preceding lessons and ones that will follow. It is especially useful for the teacher to prepare the observer for what is likely to occur during the lesson and to provide any materials that would assist in the observation (e.g., copies of reading selections, study guides, rubrics, handouts). In turn, the observer should indicate the kinds of things she or he will be looking for on this particular visit. In subsequent preobservation conferences, the observer should indicate new or different aspects of instruction that will be addressed as well as those that will be revisited.

By its very nature, the RLOF provides a set of common discussion topics both for preobservation and postobservation conferences. This communication is critical to improved reading instruction. The focus of this communication should be formative as opposed to summative. In this spirit, these sessions should never put teachers on the defensive. For instance, under no circumstances should items on the lesson observation framework be tallied or summed as an indication of instructional effectiveness. Such an application would be a clear misuse, because the results would have no measurement integrity. Rather, discussions of the lesson, both before and after the observation, represent collegial opportunities for supervisors and teachers to conceive of ways to better meet the reading needs of the children.

Ideally, the instrument will facilitate the refinement of instructional practices in reading and will demonstrate teachers' professional growth over time. For this reason, it is important that neither supervisors nor teachers place too much emphasis on any one observation. Each lesson represents just a sample of the reading instruction that occurs in any classroom. A more valid and reliable picture emerges only after multiple observations have been made. With repeated visits, observers obtain a more complete sense of how the teacher creates a conducive classroom literacy climate, handles all three phases of the lesson, conducts strategy instruction, determines materials and tasks, and adheres to best practices. In turn, recurrent

feedback on the RLOF allows teachers not only to enhance their pedagogy, but also to see visible evidence of their development.

Adapting the RLOF for different purposes

The Reading Lesson Observation Frame work is not intended to be the definitive guide to effective daily reading instruction. The instrument represents only one district's vision of what exemplary reading instruction ought to look like in its elementary schools. Users of the RLOF can easily add, delete, or revise the items to match their needs. Clearly, no one framework could serve the needs of all elementary schools, teachers, supervisors, and children. For this reason, we believe that school districts can and should adapt the RLOF to their own specific purposes.

In the primary grades, a given district may want to be more directive about how word analysis, letter-sound relationships, or phonemic awareness instruction should occur whereas upper grade instruction would focus more on strategic reading, study skills, higher order comprehension, and content area reading. Still other adjustments might be made to reflect developmental appropriateness or special characteristics in the student populations of the schools.

While we strongly encourage adapting the RLOF, we see a danger in being too specific with the criteria. The instrument could become overly prescriptive and obtrusive, and result in formulaic instruction that is lacking in creativity. Worse yet, teachers could come to view the instrument as an imposition instead of a tool that can help them to deliver high-quality, inspired reading instruction to their children. For this reason, our feeling is that individual teachers should have input into the criteria that will be used to evaluate them. Teacher voice is a vital element in any professional development endeavor, and lesson observation criteria are no exception.

We also believe that the RLOF can be used in other professional development capacities. It would be very appropriate for use in new teacher induction models as well as in peer mentoring programs. In both cases, the framework prompts teachers to work with one another and provides a structure and a focus for postlesson conferences. Preservice and graduate teacher education programs also could

incorporate the framework into their demonstration lessons and field practica experiences as a valuable tool for both instruction and evaluation.

Another potential use of the framework for professional development involves individual teachers who are interested in self-evaluation. While reviewing videotapes of their own instruction, they can use the framework to rate themselves and then reflect on the results. This personal use will appeal to certain teachers who find it to be far less threatening than subjecting their instruction to the scrutiny of peers or supervisors.

Some final thoughts

Used in concert with Vogt's (1991) programmatic checklist, the Reading Lesson Observation Framework has the potential to improve elementary level reading instruction. It can increase cooperation and communication among literacy educators and supervisors within a school district and bring them to some much needed common ground. In fact, shared understandings can be realized whether the instrument is used to evaluate reading lessons or not. The process of deciding upon the criteria for a lesson observation framework is a compelling team-building exercise in its own right. As Fullan (1998) suggested, informed collaboration occurs when enlightened administrators and teachers stop looking to external sources for instructional improvement, but rather look within, focusing on the effects that their practices exert on children's performance.

We believe that the RLOF's focus on core beliefs and understandings about how reading is learned and how it should be taught is instructive for the full range of reading professionals in elementary schools. Clearly, primary and intermediate grade classroom teachers, special education teachers, reading specialists, reading coordinators, related service professionals, and administrators all stand to benefit (Braunger & Lewis, 1998; Standards for Reading Profession als, 1998). In large measure, successful literacy learning by children is the result of skillful learning on the part of teachers and their leaders (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Interestingly, staff development with the observation framework need not be expensive or take teachers from their classrooms for extended periods of time. Rather than reinventing the wheel, districts should consider using the RLOF as a working document to trigger discussion about what criteria make the most sense locally. Much time and expense can be saved by using the existing framework as a springboard. This "no-frills"staff development approach (Darling-Hammond, 1998) encourages problem-solving discussions between teachers and leaders and can result not only in teachers trying new reading strategies, but also in principals being more openminded about the innovations.

Obviously, the most direct benefit of a lesson observation framework is supplying teachers with the feedback they need to maintain and enhance their reading pedagogy. Not only can teachers sharpen their skills through the feedback of supervisors and peers, but also they can engage in important self-evaluation of their lessons. In this sense, the framework becomes a tool for reflective practice (Duffy-Hester, 1999).

Although the RLOF was primarily intended to assist in the professional growth of teachers, it can also provide districts with a foundation for training administrators. The accompanying training permits supervisors to make informed observations of literacy instruction, which by nature is dynamic, multifaceted, and difficult to assess during brief classroom visits (Radencich, 1995). This awareness is even more critical as schools struggle to formulate intervention plans for at-risk readers. Principals will be unable to engage in such generative learning (Sergiovanni, 1994) without knowledge of the effective practices that the framework promotes.

A final major benefit of the RLOF is that the instrument can help schools defend and promote their reading programs. It can do so by providing concrete documentation that research-based, best practices are being implemented. At present, the public's perception of successful reading instruction hinges primarily on children's standardized test scores. When scores do not meet public expectations (however reasonable or unreasonable they may be), a school's literacy practices are presumed to be faulty. This conclusion arises even though few, if any, individuals ever observe any of the actual reading

instruction that transpires in the classrooms. By contrast, the RLOF yields a formal record of reading-related instructional events that authenticates the professional conduct of teachers. This kind of accountability takes on added significance in light of the politically charged atmosphere contemporary schools must endure.

Most important, however, the notion that our children's literacy attainment will increase from better executed reading instruction represents the most powerful incentive for developing and using an observation framework. Our belief is that the RLOF might help teachers, principals, and literacy supervisors to achieve this broad goal by working together to enhance the quality and consistency of daily reading lessons. In turn, as local educational practices come to resonate more closely with prevailing knowledge about exemplary reading instruction, our national literacy picture will brighten.

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Appendix

Figure 1
The Reading Lesson Observation Framework

Teacher _____ Observer _____

School year _____ Date of observation _____ Observation # _____

Observation occurred: Before reading _____ During reading _____ After reading _____

		O	C	R	N
Component I. Classroom Climate					
A.	Many different types of authentic reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, novels, and nonfiction works are displayed and are available for children to read independently.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The classroom has a reading area such as a corner or classroom library, where children are encouraged to go to read for enjoyment.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	An area is available for small-group reading instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	Active participation and social interaction are integral parts of reading instruction in this classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	The classroom environment indicates that reading and writing are valued and actively promoted (e.g., purposely writing is displayed, journals are maintained, Word Walls are used, book talks and read-alouds by teacher occur regularly).	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.		☐	☐	☐	☐
G.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Component II. Prereading Phase		O	C	R	N
A.	During the prereading discussion, the teacher asked the children to preview the text by having them read the title of the selection, look at the illustrations, and then discuss the possible contents of the text.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	Children were encouraged to activate their background knowledge through the use of K-W-L charts, webs, anticipation guides, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	By generating a discussion about the topic before reading the selection, the teacher created an interest in the reading.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	The teacher introduced and discussed the new vocabulary words in a meaningful context, focusing on those new words that were central to the understanding of the story.	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	The children were encouraged to state or write predictions related to the topic of the reading selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	Before reading occurred, the teacher helped the children identify the type of material that was to be read to determine what their purpose should be for reading it.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.	The objective for the reading lesson was clearly identified for the children along with how that objective related to previous lessons.	☐	☐	☐	☐
H.	The teacher continually assessed children's prereading discussion and made appropriate adjustments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.		☐	☐	☐	☐
J.		☐	☐	☐	☐
Component III. Guided Reading Phase		O	C	R	N
A.	At appropriate points during the reading of the selection, the children were asked to evaluate their initial predictions.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The children were asked to identify or read aloud portions of text that confirmed or disproved predictions they had made about the selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	The comprehension discussion focused on the purposes that were established for reading the selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	An appropriate mix of factual and higher level thinking questions were incorporated into the comprehension discussion.	☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 1 (continued)
The Reading Lesson Observation Framework (continued)

Component III. Guided Reading Phase (continued)

		O	C	R	N
E.	During the reading lesson, the teacher modeled fluent reading and then encouraged the children to read fluently and with expression.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	The teacher encouraged the children to adjust their reading rate to fit the material.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.	The teacher monitored the children and gave proper assistance and feedback while they read or completed practice activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
H.	The teacher modeled and encouraged the use of new vocabulary during discussion.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.	The children were encouraged to use a variety of word study strategies (e.g., words within words, context, syllabication) to decipher the meaning of unknown words as appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐
J.	The children were encouraged to use appropriate comprehension monitoring and fix-up strategies during reading (e.g., paraphrasing, rereading, using context, asking for help).	☐	☐	☐	☐
K.	The teacher reminded the children to make use of their knowledge of text structure (e.g., fictional story grammar, nonfiction text structures).	☐	☐	☐	☐
L.	The teacher periodically assessed the children's ability to monitor meaning.	☐	☐	☐	☐
M.		☐	☐	☐	☐
N.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Component IV. Postreading Phase

		O	C	R	N
A.	During the postreading discussion, the children were asked to read aloud sections of the text that substantiated answers to questions and confirmed or disproved predictions they had made about the selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The teacher asked the children to retell the material they had read, concentrating on major events or concepts.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	The children were asked to explain their opinions and critical judgments.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	The teacher had the children provide a written response to the reading (e.g., written retelling, written summarization, written evaluation).	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	Children were encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses. Examples and modeling were provided by the teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	Writing was used as a natural extension of reading tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.	The teacher continually monitored children's comprehension and provided appropriate feedback.	☐	☐	☐	☐
H.		☐	☐	☐	☐
I.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Component V. Skill and Strategy Instruction

		O	C	R	N
A.	The teacher provided a clear explanation about the structure of the skill or strategy to be learned and described when and how it could be used.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The teacher modeled the use of the skill or strategy so children were able to see how it would be used in an appropriate situation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	Any direct teaching of a phonemic element was immediately followed by children using the skill in a meaningful context.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	Explicit skill and strategy instruction was provided and applied in the context of the reading selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	The children were encouraged to use before, during, and after reading strategies as appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	Reading skill and strategy instruction moved children toward independent use through scaffolding.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.		☐	☐	☐	☐
H.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Figure 1 (continued)
The Reading Lesson Observation Framework (continued)

Component VI. Materials and Tasks of the Lesson

		O	C	R	N
A.	The selections used for the reading lesson were appropriate for children of this ability and grade level.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The reading materials represented authentic types of texts.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	Reading materials and tasks reflected a sensitivity to the diverse learning needs of the children.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	The amount and type of independent work was appropriate for the level of the children and instructional goals it was designed to achieve.	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	Independent work often contained open-ended questions that encouraged children to enhance and extend their understanding of the selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	The literacy tasks the children were asked to perform during the lesson were meaningful and relevant.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.	The children engaged in various modes of reading during the lesson (e.g., silent, oral, guided, shared).	☐	☐	☐	☐
H.	The teacher provided opportunities for the children to read for enjoyment.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.	Children were encouraged to respond personally or creatively to the reading material.	☐	☐	☐	☐
J.	A balance existed in the reading lesson between teacher-initiated and student-initiated activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
K.	Reading materials and tasks were organized themes when appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐
L.		☐	☐	☐	☐
M.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Component VII. Teacher Practices

		O	C	R	N
A.	The teacher focused on reading as a meaningful process.	☐	☐	☐	☐
B.	The instructional techniques used by the teacher and the ways they were executed reflected an awareness of recommended practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
C.	Children were grouped appropriately and flexibly.	☐	☐	☐	☐
D.	The teacher's management of the reading lesson provided for active student engagement.	☐	☐	☐	☐
E.	The pace and flow of the various phases of the reading lesson represented an effective use of time.	☐	☐	☐	☐
F.	The teacher's instruction was sensitive to the diversity of children's experiences and their social, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐
G.	The teacher actively promoted the integration of the language arts in this lesson.	☐	☐	☐	☐
H.	The teacher encouraged the children to take informed risks and promoted safe failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.	The teacher's conferences with children were timely, focused, and positive in nature.	☐	☐	☐	☐
J.	Authentic assessment practices were used in this lesson.	☐	☐	☐	☐
K.	The teacher's planned goals, actual instruction, and assessment practices were aligned.	☐	☐	☐	☐
L.		☐	☐	☐	☐
M.		☐	☐	☐	☐

Key to checklist

O = Observed	This component was observed and was judged to be of *satisfactory* quality.
C = Commendation	This component was observed and was judged to be of *very high* quality.
R = Recommendation	This component either was *not observed* or was judged to be of *unsatisfactory* quality.
N = Not applicable	This component was *not observed* because it was not appropriate for the lesson.

Figure 2
Contemporary Reading Instruction Organizer