



Bill Hanlon, Director  
Literacy Trainers  
 Shan Cannon  
 Robyn Markovic  
 Nathalie Brugman  
 Valerie Seals

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 Compiled by Mendy Henry

# LeafLIT



S O U T H E R N N E V A D A R E G I O N A L P R O F E S S I O N A L  
 D E V E L O P M E N T P R O G R A M

RPDP SPRING CLASSES

- RPDP 524C K-1 Literacy Centers
- RPDP 505 Instruction that Works (Literacy Framework) May

## New Teacher Tips and Tricks

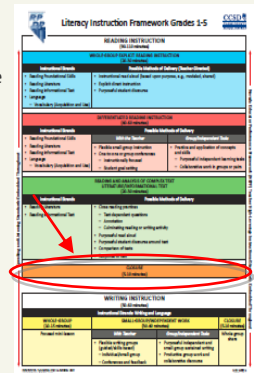
### Get Organized!

Many times, students feel disrupted and disoriented if our classrooms are full of clutter and are disorganized. In fact, disorganized classrooms can lead to distractibility in your classroom. If students are walking into a disorganized space everyday, it conveys the message to them that this is the way you do business as a teacher, even though you expect students to be doing their best daily. An article from [smartclassroommanagement.com](http://smartclassroommanagement.com) drives home the point that having an organized space is a cornerstone of classroom management and if you as a teacher respect your space, students will respect it too.

Organization calms and focuses students and shows students that you are confident and prepared. Mrs. Terhune, a teacher from Oklahoma, writes a [blog](#) that gives organizational tips and pictures of her classroom that illustrate a highly organized space. Set the learning stage for your students by preparing them a space free of distractions and clutter. You expect the best from your students and they expect the best from you!

### Closure and Assessment

Sometimes, we neglect to close our lessons, missing valuable time for students to reflect upon the purpose of the lesson and to formally assess how our students applied what was taught. During lesson closure, it is there that we decide if we need to reteach the content, give students more time to practice, or are able to move on to linking material. Most importantly, the closure activity/strategy that you choose to end your lesson should be **meaningful**. It should connect to the content and purpose of your lesson. The Literacy Instruction Framework indicates a suggested time frame of 5 minutes that will allow us to do just that, and the closure portion is a perfect place to imbed those Listening and Speaking Standards that students use to reflect upon their learning. For example, you might be a 3rd grade teacher teaching character traits, and how a character's actions contribute to a sequence of events, throughout the Framework's "blocks." For a quick closure activity, have students identify a character in the text they are using during the Differentiated Instruction block and do a quick write about the character's traits and how they contribute to the character's actions. Then, have students share their quick write with a shoulder partner at their table. When done, collect the quick writes to see how students are doing at mastering the standard RL 3.3. This type of quick write is authentic and lets you know how students are doing with this standard and where you need to proceed with your instruction.



Below are a few strategies to close your reading lessons and gain some formative data to plan for future instruction.

### Strategies for Closure and Formative Assessment

<p><b>Cornell Notes</b> are a great way for students to review the content of your lesson. Students can work with a partner to create the summary portion of their notes. These can be shared aloud "popcorn" style or turned into you for assessment. This type of note-taking strategy needs to be explicitly taught before students can do it on their own, but once they can, you can use it in a variety of content areas. (grades 3-5)</p>	<p><b>Think-Pair-Share</b> (Lyman 1981): The teacher first engages the students with a question, visual, or observation and students take a few minutes to think about it. Using predesignated partners, pair up to discuss their responses and between the pair, decide on the responses that are the best. Students then share their responses with the class. Think about how this could be hooked to your writing block where students choose a piece or sentence within their work that best illustrates the connection to the mini-lesson.</p>
<p><b>Whip Around:</b> Students quickly and verbally share one thing they learned in the class today in a whole group setting. You can have them toss a ball from one to another or just have volunteers. An EL strategy is to have students share with each other in pairs first and have them write down their thought before sharing it aloud with the group.</p>	<p><b>Response Cards:</b> These can be used with colored cards, dry erase boards, or magnetic boards that are held up simultaneously by all students in class or small group to indicate a students' response to a question posed by the teacher. Response cards are featured in our book pick of the month!</p>
<p><b>Journal Entries:</b> Students write one thing they have learned, one point that resonates with them, an answer to an overall question pertaining to the lesson, a question they still have, etc. The options using this strategy are endless. Students could then share with a partner or group after writing and the teacher could call on a few volunteers to share out. This strategy is especially effective because you have written account of student thinking for formative assessment purposes.</p>	<p><b>Comment Cards:</b> Students are looking for examples in their independent or group readings that connect to the focus of your instruction.</p>
<p><b>Web/ Concept Map:</b> Any or several forms of graphical organizers allow learners to perceive relationships between concepts through diagramming key ideas/ terms representing those concepts and connections you have taught. Reading Rockets provides several examples of these concept maps. (<a href="#">Example 1</a>, <a href="#">Example 2</a>, <a href="#">Example 3</a>)</p>	<p><b>Hand Signals:</b> Ask students to display a designated hand signal to indicate their understanding of a specific concept, principal, or process: - I understand _____ and can explain it (e.g., thumbs up). - I do not yet understand _____ (e.g., thumbs down). - I'm not completely sure about _____ (e.g., wave hand). Students then discuss with another student their understanding of the concept and why.</p>

Closure and assessment are intertwined and give us a road map as to where we need to take our students in terms of instruction. By providing students with meaningful closure activities, it gives them an opportunity to reflect upon their learning and discuss salient points of the lesson with their peers. This addresses Standard 4, Indicator 2 of the NEPF. It is how you use the information in your closure activity, to guide your instruction for subsequent lessons that addressed NEPF Standard 5, Indicators 1, 2, and 4. Standard 5, Indicator 1 references the term 'evidence' and how you as a teacher take 'evidence from your students' learning and plan on-going instruction. Standard 5, Indicator 2, references how the assessment opportunities you give students, must be tied to the learning goals of the lesson. This is why closure activities that you use to formatively assess students must be meaningful and tied to the lesson objective. Lastly, Standard 5, Indicator 4, tells us that we must be adapting our instruction based upon the evidence of these types of formative closure activities.



[NEPF information located on rppd.net](http://www.rppd.net)

STANDARD 1	STANDARD 2	STANDARD 3	STANDARD 4	STANDARD 5
<p><b>Indicator 1</b> Teacher activates all students into understanding of new concepts and skills.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2</b> Teacher makes connections explicit between previous learning and new concepts and skills for all students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3</b> Teacher makes clear the purpose and relevance of learning for all students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4</b> Teacher provides all students opportunities to build or challenge their understandings.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b> Teacher purposefully employs all students' cognitive abilities and skills.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2</b> Teacher makes appropriate demands on each student.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3</b> Teacher progressively develops all students' cognitive abilities and skills.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4</b> Teacher operates with a deep belief that all children can achieve regardless of race, perceived ability, and socioeconomic status.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b> Teacher provides opportunities for extended, productive discourse between the teacher and students, and among students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2</b> Teacher provides opportunities for all students to create and interpret multiple representations.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3</b> Teacher assists all students to use existing knowledge and skills to make connections and recognize relationships.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4</b> Teacher structures the classroom environment to enable collaboration, participation, and a positive affective experience for all students.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b> Teacher and all students understand what students are learning, why they are learning, and how they will know if they have learned it.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2</b> Teacher structures opportunities for self-monitored learning for all students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3</b> Teacher supports all students to use existing knowledge and skills to create and monitor processes.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4</b> Teacher adapts actions based on evidence generated in the lesson for all students.</p>	<p><b>Indicator 1</b> Teacher plans on-going learning opportunities based on evidence of all students' current learning status.</p> <p><b>Indicator 2</b> Teacher aligns assessment opportunities with learning goals and performance criteria for all students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 3</b> Teacher structures opportunities to generate evidence of learning during the lesson for all students.</p> <p><b>Indicator 4</b> Teacher adapts actions based on evidence generated in the lesson for all students.</p>

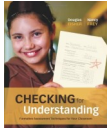
**D O N ' T F O R G E T A B O U T F A M I L Y E N G A G E M E N T !**



An indicator of Standard 5 is having a voice that affects children. Having a PTA is a crucial part of making sure that families in your community have a voice that is influential in creating policies and programs at the school level. A way to address this indicator is to have parents on your budget committee that have input about how money is spent on your campus and have parents' input on the programs you purchase to service their children. Where do parents best feel that programs and supplies need to be allocated to best meet the needs of the student population? The PTA can be a great forum for parents to bring their suggestions and concerns while in turn, having members of the PTA on your schools budget committee to make sure that parent's' voices are heard.

**Standard 5: Sharing power** – Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs. You can find all the National Standards for Family- School Partnerships at: <http://www.pta.org/nationalstandards>

**Book Pick of the Month!**



The professional book pick of the month is called *Checking for Understanding Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom* by Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. It gives teachers strategies on how to formatively assess their students using oral language, questioning, writing, projects, and tests. It's a fabulous resource!