Making Thinking and Learning Visible

Literacy Through the Day

Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten Video Viewing Guide
How to Use the Viewing Guide

The video, *Making Thinking and Learning Visible: Literacy Through the Day* can be watched in its entirety or in segments. The accompanying questions are intended to provoke thinking and discussion before, during, and after viewing.

The Viewing Guide is designed for differentiated audiences and includes reflective questions for Educators (e.g., Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten (FDELK) teams, child care staff, family resource centre staff, other primary teachers), administrators (e.g., principals, child care supervisors) and parents. Administrators and other system leaders have a vital role to play in all aspects of the implementation of FDELK. Engaging administrators and system leaders in reflective discussion will provide educator teams with support in designing programs and learning environments that promote the development of self-regulation skills.

Engaging parents in early learning provides valuable insights and observations that build bridges and relationships between community, home, and school. Insights, perspectives and shared understanding about the literacy learning that takes place in various contexts throughout the day will ultimately benefit the children.

Literacy Through the Day

“If we attend to individual children as they work, and if we focus on the progressions in learning that occur over time, our detailed observations can provide feedback to our instruction.”

(Clay, 2005, p.4)

Educators team plan programs that allow children to explore language and to communicate their thinking and learning in meaningful ways both to team members and their peers. Team members make decisions about the use of materials and the focus of their teaching that are based both on the learning expectations and on their observations of the children’s needs, and they create an environment that supports language learning and literacy in many ways.

Thinking and learning happens and is made visible in many different contexts in a FDELK classroom. There are multiple opportunities for engaging in literacy throughout the day. In this video, you will see several examples of the various contexts for literacy learning that have been planned based on assessment information and the learning expectations in the FDELK document.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction

The following information on UDL is taken from Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Instruction and Assessment for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Ministry of Education, Ontario, 2011, p.11-20. http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/L4All/L4A_en_downloads/LearningforAll%20K-12%20draft%201.pdf

UDL was inspired by work in architecture on the planning of buildings with a view to accessibility for people with physical disabilities (Turnbull et al., 2002). Architects observed that the added improvements facilitated access for all users, not just people with physical disabilities. An access ramp, for instance, provides a person using a wheelchair with easier access to a building, but it also makes it easier for a parent with a child’s stroller, a cyclist, or someone using a walker.

This notion soon found its way into education. Instruction that both responds to the characteristics of a diverse group of students and is precisely tailored to the unique strengths and needs of each student can be achieved using the principles and guidelines associated with three instructional approaches:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- differentiated instruction, and
- the tiered approach to prevention and intervention

[Diagram of Planning for Inclusion, Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Broad Learning Principles, Focused Structure for Instruction, Approaches, Assessment Framework, Teaching Strategies]
Used in combination, UDL and differentiated instruction enable educators to respond effectively to the strengths and needs of all students. UDL provides educators with broad principles for planning instruction for a diverse group of students, whereas differentiated instruction allows them to address specific skills and difficulties (Raynal & Rieunier, 1998). The two approaches overlap, sharing certain goals and strategies, such as providing a range of instructional strategies, resources, activities, and assessment tools in order to meet the different strengths, needs, readiness, and learning styles or preferences of the students in a class.

The chart below highlights places in this video where connections to UDL can be seen in the practices of the educator teams. You may wish to read the chapter(s) cited before viewing the video, or as part of your follow-up discussions after viewing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Connections to Learning for All (Draft 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:14</td>
<td>Planning for literacy</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Planning Assessment and Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Strategies to support oral language development</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Assessment for Learning, Chapter 5: Putting the Pieces Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Literacy as a whole class community; creating a community of thinkers and readers</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Planning Assessment and Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:40</td>
<td>Rethinking whole class instruction; moving towards small-group, differentiated support</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Assessment for Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Analysing observations and documentation to inform learning</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Assessment for Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Co-constructing learning and making learning visible</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Instructional Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Making learning visible; providing instructional support based on observations</td>
<td>Chapter 2: Instructional Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>Making learning visible; providing instructional support based on observations</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Assessment for Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:15</td>
<td>Analysing observations and documentation to inform learning</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Assessment for Learning</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Considerations for Viewing

The following considerations are provided to inform and focus your thinking as you view the videos.

**Numbers of Children**

The groups of children seen in the classrooms may not be representative of the numbers of actual children in the class. Children present in the video had written parental permission to be filmed.

**Classroom Space**

The space allotted to Kindergarten classes varies from school to school. The classrooms shown represent this variation. The organization of some of the physical environments shown is indicative of the rethinking and removing that has been done.

**Resources**

The classrooms shown depict a wide variation in resources. The materials and equipment in the classrooms vary based on local contexts and decision making.

**Community Partnerships**

Many Board teams benefit from community partnerships with organizations such as faculties of education, community colleges, and parent volunteers. Additional adults in the classrooms reflect these partnerships.

**Safety**

Educators are responsible for ensuring the safety of children, and for encouraging and motivating children to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Educators must ensure that children acquire the knowledge and skills needed for safe participation in all learning opportunities both inside the school and in the outdoors. Children must be aware of any required safety procedures and of ways of interacting with each other to ensure that they are not putting themselves or their peers in danger.
Sample Questions for Educator Teams

These sample questions can be used to guide reflection and discussion about literacy through the day. You may wish to reference The Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten Program (Draft 2010) (pages 18-19), which focuses on literacy in FDELK.

Before viewing the video

What do you notice about the way children use language?
How do children demonstrate they are reading?
What do you notice that engages children in writing?

While viewing the video

Notice how educator teams are:
• supporting oral language development
• making reading strategies visible to the children
• rethinking whole class instruction
• rethinking the learning environment to support literacy
• making learning visible to the children and others

What do you notice about how the children engage in non-verbal communication?

After viewing the video

How might educator teams use UDL principles to create a learning environment that supports the development of literacy skills?
How can classrooms be set up for differentiated instruction?
Sample Questions for Administrators

These sample questions can be used to guide reflection and discussion about literacy through the day. You may wish to reference *The Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten Program (Draft 2010)* (pages 18-19), which focuses on literacy.

For additional support, administrators can reference resources from the Ministry’s Administrators Leadership Development site at: [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/principalsWanttoKnow.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/leadership/principalsWanttoKnow.html)

**Before viewing the video**

What do you notice about the way children use oral language?

How do children demonstrate they are reading?

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**While viewing the video**

Notice how educator teams are:

- supporting oral language development
- making reading strategies visible to the children
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- making learning visible to the children and others

What do you notice about how the children engage in non-verbal communication?

**After viewing the video**

In what ways can you support your educator team(s) to rethink their learning environment so that it better supports the development of literacy skills?

What are the courageous conversations you would facilitate with teams:

- whose literacy practices are not aligned with practices presented in the video, (e.g., “Reflecting upon your own practices and those practices in the video, what aspect of your current practices are you going to rethink, repeat, and remove?”)?

- whose literacy practices are aligned with practices presented in the video, (e.g., “Reflecting upon your own practices and those practices in the video, what aspect of your current practices are you going to rethink, repeat, and remove?”)?
Sample Questions for Parents and Community Members

These sample questions can be used to guide reflection and discussion about literacy through the day. You may wish to reference The Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten Program (Draft 2010) (pages 18-19), which focuses on literacy.

Before viewing the video

What questions do you have about the development of oral language?
What questions do you have about the development of reading and writing skills?
In your visits to the classroom, what literacy practices did you see/not see that surprised you or do you wonder about?

While viewing the video

Note: These elements from the video are not intended to be presented to parents in isolation from a facilitated discussion, as many of the terms may be new to parents. They are intended as a guide for facilitators working with parents.

Notice how educator teams are:
• supporting oral language development
• making reading strategies visible to the children
• rethinking whole class instruction
• rethinking the learning environment to support literacy
• making learning visible to the children and others

What do you notice about how the children engage in non-verbal communication?

After viewing the video

What aspects of literacy support in oral language, reading, and writing, might be applicable at home as well as at school (e.g., think about understanding, acquiring and building on oral language, developing thinking skills, materials)?
Acknowledgements

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, Ministry of Education, would like to thank the Full-Day Early Learning–Kindergarten teams, the school administrators, the Board Program Leads, the parents/guardians and the Full-Day Kindergarten children in the following Boards and schools, for allowing us to visit and film in their classrooms, and for sharing their learning with others across the province.

Greater Essex County District School Board
Belle River Public School

Halton Catholic District School Board
St. Luke Elementary School

Halton District School Board
Mohawk Gardens Public School

Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
St. Lawrence Elementary School

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
Prince of Wales Elementary School

Lakehead District School Board
Westmount Public School

Kenora Catholic District School Board
St. Louis School

Near North District School Board
Marshall Park Public School

Ottawa Catholic District School Board
Our Lady of Wisdom School St. Elizabeth School

Peel District School Board
Marvin Heights Public School

Rainbow District School Board
Landsdowne Public School
Princess Anne Public School

Sudbury Catholic District School Board
St. Raphael School

Toronto District School Board
Pape Avenue Junior Public School

Waterloo Region District School Board
Floradale Public School

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