

OBSERVATION TOOL: USING TEXT DISCUSSION TO FURTHER READING COMPREHENSION

Purpose	Trainers, coaches, and expert teachers are encouraged to use this tool to provide in-service training on facilitating text discussions. During this session, teachers will conduct an observation and participate in a discussion designed to deepen their understanding of strategies for facilitating text discussion.
Materials	Laptop and projector Optional: Review sample materials <i>Literature Circles Lesson Plan and Materials</i> .
Media	<i>Literature Circles in High School</i> , video interview with Rebecca Wiedner, a ninth grade humanities teacher from Gateway High School. (8:11) This tool and related media and materials are located in the Doing What Works Library (https://dwwlibrary.wested.org/). For assistance, contact dww@wested.org .
Topic	Adolescent Literacy
Practice	Engaging Text Discussion

Using Text Discussion to Further Reading Comprehension

Part I. Arrange to observe a colleague’s classroom (any subject area, grade level) when the lesson incorporates whole class or small group text discussion. OR use the template below while viewing the video: *Literature Circles in High School*, ninth grade humanities teacher Rebecca Wieder at Gateway High School.

During the classroom observation or viewing of the video, complete the observations chart below

Practices	Observed	Not Observed	Notes (Briefly describe what you observed)
Discussion Preparation			
1. A discussion task structure is being used for small group discussions or for a whole class discussion.			
2. Selected text lends itself well to discussion.			
3. Students have specific roles in the discussion (e.g., literature circles, reciprocal teaching).			
4. The classroom environment and set-up are conducive to discussion.			
Teacher Actions			
5. The teacher asks probing questions to redirect groups, keeps them focused.			
6. The teacher asks follow- up questions to provide continuity and extend the discussion.			
Student Engagement			
7. Students are actively participating in conversations about the text.			
8. Students are actively listening to others.			
9. Students are making connections to the text.			
10. Students are developing, refining, and defending points of view.			

Part II. After watching the video or observing a class, a facilitator or coach may use the following prompts for discussion:

1. How did the teacher prepare students for text discussions as a whole class or in small groups?
2. What was the effect of using specific task structures, student roles, or sentence starter prompts?
3. What did you notice about the quality of student conversation about the text? Did they appear to be understanding the reading? How do you know?
4. What did the teacher do to further students' understanding of the reading during the text discussions?