



The North Carolina State Improvement Project Improving Instruction for Students With Disabilities

FIDELITY OBSERVATION PROCESS

As part of participation in the North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP), Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to observe teachers who 1) have completed Reading/Math Foundations training, 2) have completed Reading/Math Model training, AND 3) are implementing or will be implementing a reading/math model program. **This document provides an overview of the fidelity observation process and answers the questions of who and how the observations should be done by all LEAs.**

WHO SHOULD CONDUCT FIDELITY OBSERVATIONS?

The observer should, **at a minimum**, have completed a full training course in the reading or math model being implemented by the teacher who is to be observed. When possible, the observer should be a trainer in this reading/math model.¹ All persons in the LEA who will be conducting fidelity observations need to complete the inter-rater reliability process to ensure they are using similar criteria to assign ratings on the fidelity observation form. For information about the inter-rater reliability process, please see the “Reading/Math Fidelity and Inter-rater Reliability Process” document available on the NC SIP website (NCSIP.org) under Reading Forms and Surveys or Mathematics Forms and Surveys.

WHO SHOULD BE OBSERVED?

New Teachers

New teachers are defined as those teachers in your LEA who completed or finished the series of trainings (i.e., Reading/Math Foundations and Reading/Math Model training) between November 2nd of the last school year and November 1st of the current school year. **All new teachers in each LEA should be observed three times.**

Continuing Teachers

Continuing teachers are all of the remaining teachers in your LEA or those teachers who completed both Reading/Math Foundations and Model training before November 1st of the last school year. These teachers will have implemented a model program for at least one school year. **All continuing teachers in each LEA should be observed one time unless their fidelity score for the previous year was below 2.5. If the teacher’s score was below 2.5 then each LEA should observe the teacher three times the next school year and each subsequent year until a fidelity score above 2.5 is achieved.**

¹ If there is no one in an LEA who is trained in the reading/math model and can serve as an observer, then persons who have been trained by a Reading/Math Consultant to conduct fidelity observations and who have obtained an acceptable IRR score (i.e., greater than .80) may conduct fidelity observations.

HOW AND WHEN SHOULD FIDELITY OBSERVATIONS BE CONDUCTED?

For both new and continuing teachers, qualified observers (see above) should conduct observations using the fidelity observation form that corresponds to the reading/math model being implemented by the teacher who is to be observed. If the observer has access to a laptop computer or tablet with internet access, they can complete the fidelity observation form online while they are conducting the observation. Otherwise, the observer can complete a printed version of the fidelity observation form by hand and then later enter the observation online. Printed and online versions of the fidelity observation forms can be found on the NC SIP website under Reading Forms and Surveys or Mathematics Forms and Surveys.

All observations should be conducted during the school year. **New teachers are to be observed THREE times.** Observations should be spaced throughout the school year so that improvements in implementation can be observed (e.g., observe one time in fall, winter, and spring). **Continuing teachers are to be observed ONE time during the school year if their final fidelity score from the previous year was 2.5 or higher.** It does not matter when during the school year this observation occurs. **Continuing teachers with a final fidelity score from the previous year that was less than 2.5 should be observed three times.**

HOW SHOULD FIDELITY OBSERVATIONS BE SCORED, REPORTED, AND USED?

ALL OBSERVATIONS, EVEN THOSE COMPLETED BY HAND, MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE USING THE ONLINE FIDELITY OBSERVATION FORMS. The online versions of the fidelity observation forms can be found on the NC SIP website under Reading Forms and Surveys. Once submitted electronically, the fidelity score will automatically be calculated and sent via email to the observer along with an electronic version of the completed observation. The fidelity score is calculated by dividing the total number of points by the total number of items applicable to the lesson. Valid fidelity observation scores range from 0 to 3.

Fidelity observations should inform supports provided to NC SIP teachers through training, peer-observation of best practice, group coaching, and one-to-one coaching opportunities. These fidelity observations should **not** be utilized for evaluative purposes.

Fidelity scores also are reported as part of the Annual Performance Report (APR) submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) each year. In 2011-12, OSEP changed their program measures to in part focus on the improvement in implementation of grant-funded practices (i.e., implementation of reading/reading models). This means that the quality and accuracy of the fidelity data are very important as they may be used by OSEP to make continued funding decisions. To ensure the data collection process is reflective of overall NC SIP implementation, **all student progress data and fidelity scores for teachers involved in NC SIP should be submitted (regardless of the fidelity score obtained by the teacher).**