Observation Protocol for Academic Literacies (OPAL)

Purpose:

- To inform our learning community about teacher practices, classroom interactions, and educational contexts for linguistically diverse students.
(Project-wide Evaluation with OPAL data reported in aggregate form.)

- To provide opportunities for educators to reflect on and deepen knowledge about effective practices that promote student access to rigorous, relevant and empowering learning across content areas, particularly for English Learners.
(Peer coaching opportunities with coaching note taking sheet and pre-post evidence-based reflection conversations.)

Areas of Emphasis:

Four elements of effective instruction for English Learners are reflected in the OPAL. They are outlined here with accompanying questions for teacher reflection. These will be useful as you think about the implementation of the Urban Ecology for English Learners Curriculum.

OPAL DOMAIN #1: Implementing a **Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum**

What is it?	Questions for Teacher Reflection
A rigorous and relevant curriculum is cognitively complex, relevant, and challenging. It allows educators to value and capitalize on students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.	*How do I...* • Establish high expectations based on content **and** ELD standards so that I address students' linguistic and academic needs? • Identify learning objectives that address language and content standards? • Present lessons and units of study to promote cross-curricular understanding based on cognitive and language proficiency levels? • Ensure that I use curricular materials that represent cultural perspectives? • Provide access to materials **and** content in student's primary language? • Provide opportunities for students to transfer what they know from their first language to English? • Engage students in problem solving and critical thinking?

OPAL DOMAIN #2: Bridging **Connections**

What is it?	Questions for Teacher Reflection
Bridging connections with students' prior knowledge is the ability to link content to students' lives, histories, and realities in order to create change.	*How do I...* • Plan for opportunities to value and link students' personal experiences and previous learning to classroom instruction? • Provide resources and activities that reflect students' cultural backgrounds and interests? • Use strategies to pose questions and elicit student thinking about their histories, communities, cultures and languages?

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OPAL DOMAIN #3: Teaching for Maximum **Comprehensibility**

What is it?	Questions for Teacher Reflection
Comprehensibility is the attainment of maximum student understanding in order to provide access to content for all students.	*How do I...* ■ Include frequent checks for understanding within each lesson? ■ Informally assess students' understanding during my lesson and adjust my lesson based on this assessment? ■ Plan for instruction that scaffolds the task by using visuals, graphic organizers, and gestures to clarify concepts? ■ Provide multiple opportunities for students to use and appropriate academic discourse? ■ Provide linguistically-appropriate instruction by questioning and identifying tasks appropriate to each student's level of language proficiency? ■ Clarify and expand students' oral and written output?

OPAL DOMAIN #4: Multiple Opportunities for **Interaction**

What is it?	Questions for Teacher Reflection
Interactions are varied participation structures that facilitate access to the curriculum through maximum engagement and leadership opportunities.	*How do I...* ■ Assess students' linguistic, academic and social abilities in order to create flexible groupings? ■ Modify classroom structures and procedures to include accountability as part of collaborative work? ■ Create classroom routines that promote student autonomy and build self-monitoring skills? ■ Model and provide time for students to participate in academic discourse across the content areas?