



**Ambition  
Institute**

**ECT**

**Clinic 6: Literacy**

**Participant Workbook**

**KEEP  
GETTING  
BETTER**

Name: .....

Session date: .....

## Introduction

### The purpose of clinics

#### Clinics are designed for you to:

- > **Focus on a typical teaching problem** that will apply across contexts
- > **Apply** knowledge to scenarios
- > **Evaluate** teaching practice
- > **Collaborate** with colleagues

#### Clinics are NOT designed to:

- > **Discuss specific problems** from your own contexts
- > **Repeat** self-study content

### ECT Clinic 6 aims and outcomes

1. To understand the **components of literacy**
2. To understand the **underlying features of effective literacy teaching**
3. To understand **what literacy teaching looks like** for ECTs in a range of contexts
4. To reflect on **current practice** around teaching literacy

### This clinic will focus on a teaching problem:

*How can teachers meaningfully support all pupils to develop high levels of literacy?*

## Paired discussion

**Task:** In your pair, discuss the following:

*Reflect on your experience of teaching literacy in the classroom. This includes any support you have given pupils to read, write, speak or develop vocabulary.*

### Questions:

- > How do you currently support literacy development in your classroom?

Notes:

- > Which aspects of developing literacy have you had success with?

Notes:

- > Which aspects of developing literacy do you find challenging?

Notes:

## Teaching literacy

*‘Teaching literacy is... everyone’s responsibility. Every teacher can improve pupils’ literacy, including by explicitly teaching reading, writing and oral language skills specific to individual disciplines.’*

(ECF, DfE, 2019).

## What are the components of literacy?

Speaking and listening	Developing expressive and receptive language is important as language supports all other strands of literacy.
Reading	Reading is a complex skill which requires two strands: word recognition and language comprehension.
Writing	Writing is both a physical and intellectual task. Pupils must develop the skills to write by hand and spell accurately, as well as generating ideas.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary can be organised in to three tiers. Pupils are less likely to pick up tier 2 and 3 words naturally, so these will need to be explicitly taught.

## What are underlying features?

Underlying features are the components of an approach that can be applied across all subjects, phases or settings. They serve as a guide for what good practice is likely to look like.

## Underlying features in this clinic

Underlying Feature	Description
Literacy teaching is a <b>shared responsibility.</b>	All teachers are teachers of literacy. They must assess pupils’ literacy needs and consider how to motivate pupils to develop their literacy knowledge.
All teachers must understand the <b>components of literacy.</b>	Develop your own literacy expertise including an understanding of how to support pupils in reading, writing, speaking & listening and developing vocabulary. Teachers should understand what is required for literacy teaching in a specific subject or phase.
Literacy teaching must be <b>intentionally planned.</b>	Consider the literacy expectations and barriers of a subject/phase. For these expectations and barriers, plan how to activate prior knowledge and provide models and opportunities for practice. Plan for multiple opportunities to explicitly teach literacy.
Literacy should be <b>explicitly taught.</b>	Build a knowledge of pedagogies, (e.g. modelling, scaffolds, repetition) which contribute to pupils’ literacy development and plan to use these in the classroom.

## I do

**Task:** Read the scenario.

### Scenario 1

#### 'I Do' scenario

Miss O'Sullivan is teaching a unit on Tectonic Hazards to her year 10 class. In the next lesson, the pupils will be applying their knowledge of the topic so far to an extended writing question: 'To what extent are less developed countries more vulnerable to tectonic hazards than more developed countries?'

The class is confident with the content of the unit, and has responded to this style of question before, but Miss O'Sullivan knows that the structure required in their responses is particularly challenging. When planning the lesson, Miss O'Sullivan therefore starts by writing her own model, allowing her to carefully consider the components of a successful response. She identifies that including a sophisticated introductory sentence plays a particularly important part in this. As she wants to develop her pupils' independent writing, she decides not to share a complete model. Instead, she will talk pupils through a template for the response structure and emphasise the importance of the opening sentence.

In the lesson, Miss O'Sullivan begins by reminding pupils what is required from the question stem. She asks pupils "*what is meant by the stem 'to what extent'?*". One pupil responds that "*this means the question is asking us to make a judgement*". Miss O'Sullivan confirms this, then adds "*to make a judgement means to make a decision*" to further support pupils who are still unsure. She then asks pupils to spend two minutes discussing their ideas in pairs.

Together, Miss O'Sullivan and the class discuss the key content for the response, with Miss O'Sullivan modelling the structure that pupils will need to use to organise their ideas. As the class generate the relevant ideas, she writes the following prompts on the board:

Introduction  
Agree paragraph  
Disagree paragraph  
Conclusion

During this discussion, Miss O'Sullivan emphasises the importance of the introductory sentence to the success of the response, reminding pupils that this is where they will first state their judgement. This style of introductory sentence will be required in their writing throughout their time as geographers.

Before the pupils start writing, Miss O'Sullivan reminds them to use capital letters at the beginning of their sentences and to use proper nouns. As they write, Miss O'Sullivan circulates the room. After a few minutes, she has identified that some pupils have not made a detailed and sophisticated judgement in their introductions.

Miss O'Sullivan writes an example of a simple judgement on the board and places a sophisticated pupil response under the visualiser for comparison. She uses questions to elicit the difference between the simple and sophisticated judgements.

The pupils correctly identify that the sophisticated example not only makes a judgement, but also gives a justification for this decision. Miss O'Sullivan then prompts pupils to identify the words in the example that link the judgement and the justification (e.g. because) and extend the justification further (e.g. therefore). The

pupils correctly identify these words. Miss O’Sullivan explains that these are cause-and-effect connectives which are always useful to remember for this type of response.

The pupils return to their independent writing, editing their work to include the structure they have just discussed. Miss O’Sullivan knows that this style of response will also come up in her next unit, so she makes a note to recap and model the use of cause-and-effect connectives again then.

*Questions:*

- a. Where can you see the underlying features in the scenario?
  - Shared responsibility
  - Understand the components
  - Intentionally planned
  - Explicitly taught
  
- b. What difference do you think the underlying features make to the successful teaching of literacy?

**Task:** Take notes while the facilitator models how the underlying features appear in the first scenario.

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
<b>Shared responsibility</b>	
<b>Understand components</b>	
<b>Intentionally plan</b>	

<b>Explicitly teach</b>	
<b>Other notes:</b>	



## We do

### Read and analyse

#### Underlying features for scenario 2 and 3

The underlying features you need to have in mind as you read these scenarios are below. They are the same as for scenario 1:

Underlying Feature	Description
Literacy teaching is a <b>shared responsibility</b> .	All teachers are teachers of literacy. They must assess pupils' literacy needs and consider how to motivate pupils to develop their literacy knowledge.
All teachers must understand the <b>components of literacy</b> .	Develop your own literacy expertise including an understanding of how to support pupils in reading, writing, speaking & listening and developing vocabulary. Teachers should understand what is required for literacy teaching in a specific subject or phase.
Literacy teaching must be <b>intentionally planned</b> .	Consider the literacy expectations and barriers of a subject/phase. For these expectations and barriers, plan how to activate prior knowledge and provide models and opportunities for practice. Plan for multiple opportunities to explicitly teach literacy.
Literacy should be <b>explicitly taught</b> .	Build a knowledge of pedagogies, (e.g. modelling, scaffolds, repetition) which contribute to pupils' literacy development and plan to use these in the classroom.

**Task:** Read both of the following scenarios.

#### Scenario 2

Mr Shah is a year 4 teacher. In art lessons, his class have been studying the work of famous landscape artists. Over the course of the term, pupils have practised a range of techniques and have just completed their own landscape paintings.

Next week, pupils will be presenting their work at a gallery viewing afternoon with their parents and carers. The adults will be encouraged to ask their children questions about the techniques they have practised and the decisions that have informed their final pieces.

Throughout the unit, Mr Shah has encouraged pupils to describe the decisions they have made in their work. These descriptions have been supported by a vocabulary list which is organised into four categories: colour, texture, composition and mood. Mr Shah has given regular opportunities to revise the meaning of less familiar words and pupils have become increasingly confident using this vocabulary. However, they have not yet had to talk at length about their paintings or respond to spontaneous questioning. In the final lesson before the gallery viewing, Mr Shah would therefore like pupils to practise what this dialogue might look like.

For the lesson, Mr Shah has designed a set of open questions which will help pupils probe each other on their pieces of art. They will work in pairs and take turns to be the questioner and the artist, allowing pupils to practise both their expressive and receptive language.

Mr Shah starts the lesson by modelling what a good dialogue might look like. He explains that he will play the role of the artist and that the class will use the questions to ask him about his work. He projects a painting by Utagawa Hiroshige onto the board to refer to as his model.

Mr Shah selects a pupil to start, who asks “*what kind of mood or atmosphere did you want to create in your painting?*”. Mr Shah responds by saying “*I wanted the sea to seem powerful and maybe a bit mysterious.*” He then stops and prompts the class to reflect on his response, asking them to identify what was good about it and how it could be improved. One pupil identifies that Mr Shah has used two words from the vocabulary list, which is good. Another suggests that Mr Shah could go on to explain how he thinks he has achieved this mood.

Mr Shah agrees and re-models his response, saying “*I wanted the sea to seem powerful and maybe a bit mysterious, so I created a contrast between the violent sea and the calm sky.*” Mr Shah identifies that the use of the word ‘so’ allows him to expand his initial response. He reminds the class that there is a list of connectives on the wall, which they should refer to when they break away into their pairs.

Mr Shah then asks, “who thinks they have a question which follows on logically from what I have just said?”. Mr Shah wants to encourage pupils to listen carefully to ensure that they are asking questions which allow their partners to explain their thought process in detail. He continues to model the dialogue in this way, prompting pupils to reflect on his answers and ask effective questions in response. The class then split into pairs to practise the dialogues.

### **Scenario 3**

Mr Usher is teaching a unit on cells to year 7. He is aware that pupils will need to grasp extensive technical vocabulary to succeed in this unit, and that this knowledge provides the foundation for their learning in Biology as they move up the school.

Mr Usher knows that this technical vocabulary is challenging for several reasons. Words such as cytoplasm, chlorophyll and mitochondria are complex and may be difficult for some pupils to decode and pronounce. Equally, whilst vocabulary such as cell wall is simpler to say and spell, the typical connotations of a ‘wall’ (solid and impermeable) may confuse pupils when they learn that in this case they do not apply.

Mr Usher’s initial teaching of new vocabulary focuses on decoding the words and establishing their meaning. Knowing that an image will support pupils to understand the words in context, he starts by projecting a diagram of a cell and talking pupils through each of the labels one by one. He provides a simple explanation for each word and asks pupils to say them aloud using call and response. Through class discussion, Mr Usher then supports pupils to write class definitions for each word.

In the following couple of lessons, Mr Usher consolidates pupils’ knowledge by ensuring that they are confident with pronunciation and meaning. He designs recall activities that require pupils to practise saying words, rather than just identifying them in written text, and targets common spelling mistakes.

As the unit progresses, Mr Usher focuses on the second challenge of ensuring that pupils are confident using the new vocabulary in context and in response to questions and lengthier explanations. He provides regular opportunities to recall the new vocabulary, for instance planning low-stakes quizzes and providing partially or incorrectly labelled diagrams for pupils to fill in. This helps him identify and respond to, pupil misconceptions, such as mixing up cytoplasm and chlorophyll.

When preparing quizzes, Mr Usher considers how he can frame questions differently to ensure that pupils are confident both identifying a new word and understanding its role in the cell. For instance, in one lesson Mr Usher asks pupils 'which part of the cell gives it shape and structure?' and in the next asks them to 'describe the function of the cell wall'.

When pupils are confident with this style of questioning, Mr Usher increases the challenge, for instance asking them to 'write a sentence about the cell wall using the words if/then/because'. This encourages an even deeper understanding of the words by allowing pupils to practise their new declarative knowledge and potentially explore the relationships between cells and sub-cellular structures. For example, 'If a cell contains chlorophyll, then it must be a plant cell because plants photosynthesise and animals do not.'

**Task:** Respond to the following questions independently.

*Questions:*

- a. Where can you see the underlying features in the two scenarios?
  - Shared responsibility
  - Understand components
  - Intentionally plan
  - Explicitly teach
  
- b. What difference do you think the underlying features make to the teaching of literacy?

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
<b>Shared responsibility</b>	
<b>Understand components</b>	
<b>Intentionally plan</b>	

<b>Explicitly teach</b>	
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**Task: share in pairs.**

Notes:

**Task: share with the group.**

Notes:

**Reflect and record:** Take a few minutes to reflect on the group discussion and record your final thoughts on scenarios 2 and 3.

Notes:

## Non-example

### Read and analyse

#### Underlying features for scenario 4

The underlying features you need to have in mind as you read these scenarios are below. They are the same as the previous scenarios:

Underlying Feature	Description
Literacy teaching is a <b>shared responsibility</b> .	All teachers are teachers of literacy. They must assess pupils' literacy needs and consider how to motivate pupils to develop their literacy knowledge.
All teachers must understand the <b>components of literacy</b> .	Develop your own literacy expertise including an understanding of how to support pupils in reading, writing, speaking & listening and developing vocabulary. Teachers should understand what is required for literacy teaching in a specific subject or phase.
Literacy teaching must be <b>intentionally planned</b> .	Consider the literacy expectations and barriers of a subject/phase. For these expectations and barriers, plan how to activate prior knowledge and provide models and opportunities for practice. Plan for multiple opportunities to explicitly teach literacy.
Literacy should be <b>explicitly taught</b> .	Build a knowledge of pedagogies, (e.g. modelling, scaffolds, repetition) which contribute to pupils' literacy development and plan to use these in the classroom.

**Task:** Read the following scenario.

#### Scenario 4

Miss O'Sullivan's is teaching a unit on Tectonic Hazards to her year 10 class. Next lesson, the pupils will be applying their knowledge of the topic so far to an extended writing question: 'To what extent are less developed countries more vulnerable to tectonic hazards than more developed countries?'

The class is confident with the content of the unit, and has responded to this style of question before, but Miss O’Sullivan is aware that pupils have previously found these writing tasks challenging. When planning, Miss O’Sullivan therefore makes a mental note to remind pupils of the structure of the question, as they are discussing the content.

In the lesson, Miss O’Sullivan begins by reminding pupils what is required from the question stem. She asks pupils *“what is meant by the stem ‘to what extent?’”*. One pupil responds that *“this means the question is asking us to make a judgement”*. Miss O’Sullivan’s confirms this, then adds *“to make a judgement means to make a decision”* to further support pupils who are still unsure. She then asks pupils to spend two minutes discussing their ideas in pairs.

Together, Miss O’Sullivan and the class discuss the key content for the response. As the class generate the relevant ideas, she adds them to a ‘agree’ and ‘disagree’ columns on the board, explaining that pupils will need to cover both sides of the argument.

Agree  
Disagree

Before the pupils start writing, Miss O’Sullivan reminds them to use capital letters at the beginning of their sentences and to use proper nouns. As they write, Miss O’Sullivan circulates the room. After a few minutes, she has identified that many pupils have jumped straight into an ‘agree’ paragraph, rather than opening with a clear introductory sentence. She knows that this style of introductory sentence is key to the success of the responses and that it will be used throughout their time as geographers.

Miss O’Sullivan intervenes by identifying a pupil response which includes an introductory statement and showing it to the class under the visualiser. She uses questions to elicit what makes the start of the response successful. The pupils correctly identify that the example includes an opening sentence in which the writer makes a judgement and gives a justification for this decision. Miss O’Sullivan explains that this introductory sentence is crucial for framing the rest of the response and that the justification element ensures that the response is sophisticated. She then prompts pupils to review their own introductory statements and amend them accordingly.

The pupils return to their independent writing. Miss O’Sullivan reflects that many pupils in the class could do with more support on the specifics of a successful response, so plans to think about how she can model this more effectively when covering similar questions in the following unit.

**Task:** Respond to the following questions independently.

*Questions:*

- A. Which of the underlying features are not present in the scenario? (There may be one or multiple)
  - Shared responsibility
  - Understand components
  - Intentionally plan
  - Explicitly teach
  
- B. What is the impact of these features not being present on the teaching of literacy?

Missing underlying feature	Impact of feature not being present

**Task: share in pairs.**

Notes:

**Task: share with the group.**

Notes:

## Reflect and record

Take a few minutes to reflect on the group discussion and record your final thoughts on scenario 4.

Notes:

## Reflections and action planning

- > Of the underlying features, which do you already use to help you to teach literacy?
- > Which of the underlying features do you think would be useful to discuss with your mentor or another experienced colleague?
- > Any questions?

Record your next steps:



## Appendix

### I do (2)

**Task:** Read the scenario.

#### Scenario 5

Ms Messud is a reception teacher. Recently, children in her class have been demonstrating a secure knowledge of recognising and sounding out individual letters. As a result, they have begun practising blending as part of their phonics curriculum.

Ms Messud knows that literacy is an important area of learning and development, as outlined in the statutory framework for the Early years Foundation Stage (EYFS). More generally, she knows that literacy development is foundational for children's success in all aspects of their education and beyond. Consequently, Ms Messud is keen to reinforce the knowledge and skills learnt in phonics lessons in all parts of the curriculum. She wants children to make links between what they learn through her phonics instruction and their other activities, so that they can confidently use this developing knowledge in a range of contexts.

Recently, children in her class have been particularly interested in the natural world and the life cycles of animals. The school pond has some frogspawn in it and children have enjoyed observing hatching tadpoles as part of developing their understanding of the world. As a result, children have been drawing frogspawn and tadpoles in the art area and have been eager to play in the small world area, where Ms Messud has set up a pond. Ms Messud therefore decides to plan some opportunities to reinforce children's blending with activities based around the natural world.

To support children to initially make a link between these two areas, Ms Messud decides to plan a short, teacher-led activity. She has pre-prepared four decodable words which are themed around the natural world: 'mud', 'frog', 'sun' and 'swim'. She has selected these words from a selection of decodable books on the topic of the natural world – specifically about the life cycle of animals, pond animals and frogs. She chooses only a few decodable words from these books, so that there is still a high level of challenge when children read them independently.

For this activity, she follows the same process that she uses in her phonics instruction. She has each word printed on a card with a picture above and sound buttons below to direct children's attention. For the first word, she models sounding out words and blending them together: *"M-u-d. Mud. I read the word by blending the sounds. I looked at the letters and I read the sounds m-u-d from left to right. I then blended them together to make 'mud'.*

She then supports children to practise. For the second word, she sounds out the letters for children to blend. For the final two words, she gets children to sound out the letters and blend them together as a group.

In the provision, Ms Messud has also set up a range of activities to encourage children to continue practising these blending skills. She has put out the decodable books, which she used to plan her initial instruction, for children to read. Around the small world area, she has put up some decodable words related to the natural world. These include the four the class practised together, but also some other related words such as 'pond', 'green' and 'log'. These words again have sound buttons below them to help direct children's attention to the sounds. In the natural world area, she puts out some related toys and magnetic letters that children may want to play with. Finally, she also lays out some lily pads on the floor of the classroom which each have a decodable

word on. She chooses a range of words for this; some are related to the natural world, and others are decodable words that children may have encountered previously.

Over the next few days, children engage with a range of these activities in varied ways. Some choose to read aloud and re-enact the stories they read in the small world area. Others hop around on the lily pads like frogs, while sounding out and blending some of the words that they land on. Ms Messud is pleased to hear many children are more confidently reading and blending decodable words from a range of activities. In addition to this, children are starting to regularly use some of this new vocabulary in their play.

*Questions:*

- a. Where can you see the underlying features in the scenario?
  - Shared responsibility
  - Understand components
  - Intentionally plan
  - Explicitly teach
- b. What difference do you think the underlying features make to the teaching of literacy?

**Task:** Take notes while the facilitator models how the underlying features appear in the first scenario.

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
<b>Shared responsibility</b>	
<b>Understand components</b>	
<b>Intentionally plan</b>	

<b>Explicitly teach</b>	
<b>Other notes:</b>	

## References

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