Assessment Means Form: Perseverance

Assessment Overview: Teachers should aim to assess students in the most naturalistic environment first (i.e., observation) before moving on to more intentionally structured activities.

What Teachers Need to Know and Observe: For many children, persisting through an activity will depend on whether they are emotionally and/or cognitively engaged, particularly for young children, who need the "emotional interest" to keep them involved in the activity. Some children, however, are able to persist through activities even when emotional and cognitive engagement is low. When children are not emotionally or cognitively engaged but physically still engaged (e.g., a child is completing a picture/word matching task, but daydreaming about something else), we refer to this as being *behaviorally engaged*. Although teachers may want to think about emotionally engaging children in learning activities in order to help them persevere, when observing children for this construct, teachers should evaluate behavioral engagement only.

Key Terms:

- ➢ **Perseverance**: Continued effort to engage or re-engage in an activity despite difficulty, frustration, or facing challenging aspects of the activity.
- ➢ **Behavioral Engagement:** Active, behavioral and/or verbal participation in an activity. Also referred to as "engagement."
- ➢ **Time allotted:** Activities should span the length of time that is typical of the classroom and developmentally appropriate for the grade level.
- ➢ **Trials:** Parts, sections, steps, or items within an activity.
- ➢ **Points of challenge:** Parts, sections, steps, or items within an activity that are particularly difficult for a child.
- ➢ **Strategies/Supports** for perseverance: Methods used or taught to children to keep them behaviorally engaged and able to persist throughout the activity. Strategies include (but are not limited to) thinking out what to do next, working out an issue, and taking a short break.

General Teacher Instructions:

Observe during "typical" days and settings.

- ➢ Data should only be collected during part of the typical daily routine of the classroom (e.g., instructional time, transitions) AND when the child is experiencing a typical day for him/her (e.g., if the child is dealing with a significant emotional experience or if the child is not feeling well, data should not be collected). It should <u>not</u> be collected during a time when there are atypical distractions (unfamiliar classroom visitors, fire drills, accidents, nearby construction). It should also not be collected in a particular setting in which the child's performance is inconsistent with other activities or contexts (e.g., the child is able to persevere throughout all activities except for those involving writing).

Observe under "appropriately difficult" circumstances. Teachers should work within the child's ability range, somewhere just beyond "not challenging" to the upper boundary of "most challenging" (i.e., somewhere within the child's zone of proximal development). The teacher may need to determine/verify the level of difficulty or challenge for a given child at the conclusion of the activity (e.g., by asking, "What did you think of the activity?").

Provide instruction and instructional tools as you always do. Instructional strategies and tools that are used as part of everyday instruction should continue to be used (e.g., implements for organizing, comprehending, and retaining information). For example, it is appropriate for teachers to provide visual representations of a task; remind the class that an activity may be approached in different ways, and provide support for completing the activity, such as providing the number of steps or components, modeling an approach, offering reminders of how much time is left, etc.

Record child's request or need for support. A child who is able to use learned strategies for persevering independently at a point of challenge during an activity is demonstrating the ability to persevere. However, for skills in the second understanding persevering with assistance may place the child at Skills E or F, so it is important to understand and distinguish whether the child asked for help and/or whether the teacher had to intervene in order for the child to continue in the activity:

➢ A child **may request content-related help** from the teacher at any time; it is never considered the teacher support for perseverance (i.e., should not be considered when placing the child on the progression) to ask for content-related help.

➢ A child who is **unable to reengage** in an activity without the teacher intervening to help (i.e., offering a strategy) **IS NOT considered needing support** for persevering if **the child requests support** from the teacher to continue in the activity.

➢ A child who is **unable to reengage** in an activity without the teacher intervening to help (i.e., offering a strategy) **IS considered needing support** for persevering if the child is ONLY able to reengage in the activity with **unrequested support** from the teacher.

A note on strategy use. Sometimes children use strategies that make it appear that a child has discontinued working (e.g., looking up at the ceiling, putting head on the desk). If it appears that a child has discontinued working, the teacher should wait an appropriate amount of time to see if the child resumes working independently. If a teacher determines that the child needs support to behaviorally re-engage, s/he should include that in the observation note to help determine/provide evidence for the child's learning status. If a child initiates working in the activity after being instructed to do so and then stops working, the teacher may wait to see if the child resumes behavioral engagement before offering support or wait to see if child requests content-related support from an adult or peer.

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Observation Instructions: Observe child engaging in classroom activities (varying in familiarity, difficulty, and/or group size) where there is an expectation for him or her to persevere. If needed, the teacher should first establish the expectation that children need to sustain behavioral engagement in classroom activities.

Potential Opportunities for Observation	Potential Materials
➢ Any "typical" classroom routine. ➢ Any classroom setting in which a child is participating in an activity where there is an expectation for the child to persevere. ➢ Activities should include tasks that vary in familiarity and/or difficulty for the child. ➢ Any group size: (whole class, small group, pairs, or individual).	➢ There are no specific materials required when observing for this construct.

Placing a Child on this Progression: With all progressions, the goal is to identify the level at which the child is solidly performing. If the child is inconsistent at a given level, as children often are when they are learning a new skill, the correct placement is at a lower level. The teacher needs to collect enough evidence to be confident that the child is correctly placed on the progression. This will include multiple pieces of evidence where the child demonstrates the skill level at which he/she is placed and at least one documented instance of allowing the child the opportunity to demonstrate his/her skills/behavior at the next highest level. It will be difficult to place some children on a progression. Children who are not yet at Skill A should be marked as "Emerging" for that progression. Children who have reached the highest level of a progression should be marked at that highest level.

Observation Prompts:

➢ If the child does not begin to work on the activity after being instructed to do so, the teacher may ask, "What might help you get started?" or "What can you do first?" If the child then begins working in the activity, the teacher may use the remainder of the time to observe the child. If the child is still unable to begin, the skills of the activity may be beyond the child's zone of proximal development (i.e., the range of what they can do without help and with help), and therefore, the teacher should not use this activity as an observation opportunity.

➢ Before children begin working on an activity that is expected to be difficult or frustrating, the teacher may provide a whole class reminder that putting forth effort has value (e.g., "Remember we worked really hard to fill the class jar and earned a class reward.") and is part of an overarching goal (e.g., Teacher reminds the class, "Being good at a sport involves learning separate skills that all combine to enable you to play the game well."). Teachers may remind the class that some activities require more time, effort, and/or thought.

➢ Teachers may also provide:
   o Positive reinforcement to an individual or the whole class related to progress in an activity (e.g., Teacher observes a child completing Steps 1- 3, and says, "You're making good progress, keep working hard.") or highlighting specific engagement behaviors observed by the teacher (e.g., "I like the way [student] is working hard.").
   o Brief individual or whole class reminders to sustain engagement during an activity (e.g., "Keep working on [activity]").
   o A read aloud to an individual child during the activity (making sure to document if the child requested the read aloud or not as evidence to support the determination of the child's learning status).

NOTE: There are no skill-level teacher instructions, Situations, or Tasks for Perseverance.