

# DTWS Observation Protocol

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This is an observation tool designed to help educators develop a picture of a child's current skills of communication in terms of oral language, drawing and writing as three overlapping modes of text creation.

**Resources needed:** Blank paper of A3 or A4 size, a variety of good quality drawing and writing implements appropriate for the age of the children involved (felt tip pens, crayons, pencils). A space that is comfortable for the children (appropriate seating and table).

The task may be administered to 1, 2 or 3 children at the same time. (Sometimes children are more relaxed in a small group and they tend to interact in ways that stimulate their responses).

**Observation process:** As the children are engaged with the task, take notes (see observations below) or record the session for transcription at a later date.

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## Instruction 1

**Say to the child (or children)**

*Today I would like you to do some drawing about . . .*

**Or - If you know a child (or children) has/have started to experiment with letters or words or is already writing say . . .**

*Today I would like you to do some drawing and writing about . . .*

**[Choose from]**

- 1) *Who lives at your house – that includes people and pets OR*
- 2) *Your favourite game OR*
- 3) *Things you like to do with your friends OR*
- 4) *Your favourite activity here at (Kindergarten or preschool or school) OR*
- 5) *Anything you would like*

*[If you know the child/children well you can prompt them to draw and write about things you know they like to do, or their friends or family members – the idea is to give the child a safe starting point for their text creation]*

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## Instruction 2

**[For children who have started to experiment with letters or words or are already writing]**

**Say:** *I would like you to start with a drawing and then add some writing to your drawing*

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## Instruction 3

**If there are 2-3 children, try to not engage with them while they work unless they ask a specific question.**

**Say:** *If you like . . . you can talk to your friends as you work*

**OR** **If there is only one child you may like to prompt some talk throughout the process. You might say**

*If you like you can talk to me as your work*

**You might prompt a child who doesn't spontaneously talk with you by saying**

*That looks interesting – would you like to tell me about your drawing – what is happening here?*

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## Instruction 4

**For children who have started to experiment with letters or words or are already writing - After a reasonable amount of time for the drawing OR when you can see they are happy with their drawing, prompt them to add some writing to their drawing –**

**Say** *I can see you have a great drawing there – I would now like you to add some writing to your drawing*

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## Instruction 5

**When you can sense that a child has 'done enough' choose from the following**

*Have you finished?*

*Is there anything you would like to add?*

*Is there anything you would like me to know about your work?*

*Please tell me what is happening here? Who/what is this?*

*Please read me your story?*

## DTWS: Observation processes

**Name of child:** ..... **Date of Observation:** .....

**Observer:** .....

	Processes	Observations
1	Approach to the task: eagerness to get started and to stay focused – staying on task – concentration - how long do they take to complete the task all up	
2	Comfort with, and control of the materials: pencil grasp, handedness, control of the paper	
3	Posture: how does the child sit as he/she works	
	Pencil grasp, pencil pressure, ability to control the page while drawing or writing	
4	If, 2 or 3 children – how do they interact with the others. If one child, do they talk to you without prompting as they work or do they need to be prompted? How do they respond to your prompts?	
5	If they are talking, try to note down what each child contributes to the talk – is it their work they are talking about or are they noticing other people’s texts and commenting – Or are they talking about things that are removed from the task altogether?	
6	If a child does not interact with other children – or you – it will be important to note this down.	
7	Do they make additions or changes to their own drawings as a result of their comments about others (e.g. “you have drawn a dog, we don’t have a dog – I am going to add my cat”)	
8	Are any children more dominant in terms of talk? Are any children particularly noticeable because they are non-verbal? Or just very limited in their language use?	
9	Do any of the children go back and forth between drawing and writing?	
10	How does the child respond when you ask he/she to tell you about their work?	
11	If they have added words can they read these?	

## DTWS: Analysis of the text

<b>1</b>	Did the child talk about the text that they had created in ways that: a) explained what they had drawn and written about? b) added further meaning? c) explained and added to the meaning? d) was unrelated to the task?	
<b>2</b>	Are the drawings detailed? Describe	
<b>3</b>	Have they written their name (prompted or unprompted)? Is it clear and legible? OR Have they used a mix of letters/symbols but told you that it is their name? Did they write their name in upper case letters or with a Capital letter and the rest in lower case? Did they add a second name?	
<b>4</b>	Did they add text? Is the text in the form of scribble? Random letters/symbols? Individual words? Labels? Sentences?	
<b>5</b>	Are there noticeable connections between the drawing and any written words?	
<b>6</b>	If the child has written more than one sentence, use the writing analysis tool (Mackenzie et al, 2013; Mackenzie & Scull, 2016) to analyse in terms of text structure, sentence structure, vocabulary use, spelling, punctuation and handwriting.	

### Further Comments or observations