



October 2021

McGraw Hill
Response to EdReports Evaluation
Open Court Reading Grades K-2

Summary

McGraw Hill appreciates the opportunity to provide a response to the EdReports review of our *Open Court Reading* program (Grades K-2). We are pleased to see that its reviewers recognize the program's research-based foundational skills development, text quality, evidence-based discussion, as well as many facets of its overall quality. Despite noted areas of strength, we are disappointed to have received Partially Meets Expectations for Gateways 1 and 2 across grades K-2.

Positive student outcomes are the primary measure to which McGraw Hill holds itself and its programs. In this regard, we are proud of our *Open Court Reading* program and its decades-long history of research-based pedagogy, efficacy, and success for learners across the country. We urge teachers and administrators to review the *Open Court Reading* program for themselves. For more information regarding the program, its research basis, and its history of success, please visit opencourtreading.com.

Gateways 1 and 2

While we are disappointed with our overall ratings of Partially Meets Expectations at each grade for K-2, we appreciate that EdReports has noted many areas of strength.

We are pleased to see these areas of strength recognized by EdReports:

- Quality of anchor texts
- Distribution of text types and genres
- Questions and assignments grounded in the text
- Frequent opportunities and protocols for evidence-based discussion
- Strong support for speaking and listening
- On-demand and process writing, as well as short, focused projects
- Explicit instruction in phonological awareness
- Phonological awareness on a research-based continuum
- Phonics demonstrated with a research-based progression of skills
- Decoding and encoding common and additional vowel teams
- Instruction and practice to address acquisition of print concepts
- Coherently sequenced, high-quality sets of questions and tasks



While there are many areas of strengths noted, as well as others where we believe the program deserved a higher rating, we strongly disagree with the rating for Indicator 2D that follows. We encourage reviewers to make their own determination of how the program addresses culminating tasks and integrated literacy skills.

Indicator: Culminating tasks require students to demonstrate their knowledge of a unit's topic(s) through integrated literacy skills (e.g., a combination of reading, writing, speaking, listening).

We feel that our Inquiry strand does exactly this, as evidenced by the description below.

Inquiry is the time during the *Open Court Reading* lesson where students learn more about the unit topic by doing an investigation. Students are introduced to the topic in the Unit Opener, and they learn different facets of the topic by reading each lesson's selection(s). Whether the investigation is done individually, in small groups, or as a whole class, students learn valuable research skills, such as searching Internet websites for information, determining whether information is reliable, interviewing subject-matter experts, collecting information, taking notes, and presenting information in a variety of ways.

In each grade level, Inquiry begins in the first couple of units as a whole-class endeavor. After students start to understand what Inquiry entails, then they may be allowed to work in small groups or individually on investigations. At the beginning of the year, the teacher models the steps of the investigation for students, who then learn to use these steps for subsequent investigations.

As part of the Inquiry process, students read, write, speak, and listen. Students are required to conduct research, document findings, listen to others, take turns speaking, and speak about the subjects under discussion—subjects related to the unit topic. Students are asked to follow steps to adequately conduct research and collect information regarding their topic. Students are required to:

- 1) Think about the unit topic, wonder, and ask questions.
- 2) Choose a question related to the unit topic to research further and create a conjecture.
- 3) Read books, ask experts, or conduct experiments to try to find an answer to the question.
- 4) Revisit the question and conjecture with the new information and revise the conjecture, if necessary.
- 5) Do additional research and reading, if necessary.
- 6) Develop and present findings.

The inquiry process begins with students discussing what they have learned from the weekly selections as well as their own research and texts they have read from multiple sources. Students write and post ideas and questions to the Concept/Question Board throughout the unit. Students



discuss how the unit’s selections they have read add to their knowledge of the topic and connect to their research.

Students then decide how they will share their research and findings with the class. Groups work together to publish the class research, as teachers guide students to assign roles within the groups to ensure all students participate. Students share their Inquiry findings—including how new information, learned through the reading selections and research, changed their conjecture. Student-created presentations will vary, but may include class books, murals, reports, posters, magazine articles, slideshow presentations, plays or skits, debates, photo-documentaries, blog posts, brochures, opinion essays, and experiments featuring student-recorded observations.

The Inquiry Rubrics help teachers assess each student’s progress as a researcher and as a member of a collaborative team, as well as the class’s progress with Inquiry.

At the end of each unit, students participate in the Theme Wrap-Up and Review. Students take part in a whole-group discussion that focuses on the unit topic, the Big Idea question, and their favorite selections featured within the unit. Students review the student-created Concept/Question Board, highlighting what they learned about the topic, reviewing questions that were answered, and how their ideas have changed since the beginning of the unit. Students may suggest additional questions and ideas they would like to further explore.

The following page numbers indicate locations in the Teacher Edition where you can see the steps of the Inquiry process.

Kindergarten: Unit 8, pp. T232, T233, T292, T293, T360, T361, T432, T433

Grade 1: Unit 4, pp. T341, T373, T409, T465, T499

Grade 2: Unit 2, pp. T17, T51, T129, T165, T189, T239, T295, T341, T377

Despite the evidence presented, EdReports reviewers responded in a subjective manner:

- “For all three grades, reviewers determined that the Inquiry project was not the same as a culminating project because it did not *always* lend itself to students demonstrating their knowledge of the unit topic. The inquiry project was about the topic throughout the unit, but students *could have* completed the Inquiry project without completing the unit, which does not integrate knowledge, skills, or standards learned within the unit. Synthesis requires using *all of the learning* within the unit in order to complete a culminating task. The Inquiry project is related to the topic but ultimately a stand-alone experience.”



Gateway 3

Due to a Partially Meets rating for Gateways 1 and 2, this program did not receive a rating for Gateway 3, Instructional Supports and Usability.

McGraw Hill believes that educators using *Open Court Reading* receive best-in-class training and support that helps them implement with fidelity throughout their adoption of the program. Professional development and teacher support is embedded in the teachers' digital platform and print teacher material, including teaching videos, point of use differentiated instruction, and materials to support language development. Assessment tools and materials help teachers track students' progress toward mastery of ELA standards throughout their implementation of the program.

The Science of Learning and the Science of Reading

At McGraw Hill, we're dedicated to the application of basic and pedagogical research toward the development of products designed to improve student and educator outcomes. As such, we have drawn upon decades of rigorous literacy research, as well as our collaborative work with preeminent reading researchers and experts, to inform the design, development, and ongoing efficacy testing of our literacy solutions. How do students learn? This question is at the core of learning science—and at the core of our approach to optimizing learning. We recognize that equitable literacy education provides learners with the instruction they need, when they need it, while also providing a robust learning experience that addresses each of the skills and competencies identified as critical for successful literacy development.

Open Court Reading is a reading and language arts curriculum built upon decades of research, field testing, and time-tested instructional models. The authors, who are educators and researchers, continuously update the program to include the latest research findings about the most effective ways to teach children to read and write. Key instructional areas build across grade levels to ensure students become confident and effective readers by the end of grade 3.

Open Court Reading has had a long and successful history of teaching critical foundational skills using research-based materials that integrate findings from learning theory and cognitive science, also known as The Science of Reading, as well as literacy development and teacher expertise. Equally as important, these skills have always been an integral part of a comprehensive language arts curriculum.

While we appreciate EdReports giving us the opportunity to respond to their review, we encourage you to review the *Open Court Reading* program for yourself. For more information regarding the program, its research basis, and its history of success, please visit opencourtreading.com.



October 2021

McGraw Hill
Response to EdReports Evaluation
Open Court Reading Grades 3-5

Summary

McGraw Hill appreciates the opportunity to provide a response to the EdReports review of our *Open Court Reading* program (Grades 3-5). We are pleased to see that its reviewers recognize the program's research-based literacy skills development, text quality, evidence-based discussion, as well as many facets of its overall quality. Despite noted areas of strength, we are disappointed to have received Partially Meets Expectations for Gateways 1 and 2 across grades 3-5.

Positive student outcomes are the primary measure to which McGraw Hill holds itself and its programs. In this regard, we are proud of our *Open Court Reading* program and its decades-long history of research-based pedagogy, efficacy, and success for learners across the country. We urge teachers and administrators to review the *Open Court Reading* program for themselves. For more information regarding the program, its research basis, and its history of success, please visit opencourtreading.com.

Gateways 1 and 2

While we are disappointed with our overall ratings of Partially Meets Expectations at each grade for 3-5, we appreciate that EdReports has noted many areas of strength.

We are pleased to see these areas of strength recognized by EdReports:

- Quality of anchor texts
- Distribution of text types and genres
- Questions and assignments grounded in the text
- Frequent opportunities and protocols for evidence-based discussion
- Strong support for speaking and listening
- Interact with and build academic vocabulary in and across texts
- Coherently sequenced, high-quality sets of questions and tasks
- Explicit instruction of grade-level grammar and usage standards

While there are many areas of strengths noted, as well as others where we believe the program deserved a higher rating, we strongly disagree with the rating for Indicator 2D that follows. We encourage reviewers to make their own determination of how the program addresses culminating tasks and integrated literacy skills.

Indicator: Culminating tasks require students to demonstrate their knowledge of a unit's topic(s) through integrated literacy skills (e.g., a combination of reading, writing, speaking, listening).

We feel that our Inquiry strand does exactly this, as evidenced by the description below.

Inquiry is the time during the Open Court Reading lesson where students learn more about the unit topic by doing an investigation. Students are introduced to the topic in the Unit Opener, and they learn different facets of the topic by reading each lesson's selection(s). Whether the investigation is done individually, in small groups, or as a whole class, students learn valuable research skills, such as searching Internet websites for information, determining whether information is reliable, interviewing subject-matter experts, collecting information, taking notes, and presenting information in a variety of ways.

In each grade level, Inquiry begins in the first couple of units as a whole-class endeavor. After students start to understand what Inquiry entails, then they may be allowed to work in small groups or individually on investigations. At the beginning of the year, the teacher models the steps of the investigation for students, who then learn to use these steps for subsequent investigations.

As part of the Inquiry process, students read, write, speak, and listen. Students are required to conduct research, document findings, listen to others, take turns speaking, and speak about the subjects under discussion—subjects related to the unit topic. Students are asked to follow steps to adequately conduct research and collect information regarding their topic. Students are required to:

- 1) Think about the unit topic, wonder, and ask questions.
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- 3) Read books, ask experts, or conduct experiments to try to find an answer to the question.
- 4) Revisit the question and conjecture with the new information and revise the conjecture, if necessary.
- 5) Do additional research and reading, if necessary.
- 6) Develop and present findings.

The inquiry process begins with students discussing what they have learned from the weekly selections as well as their own research and texts they have read from multiple sources. Students write and post ideas and questions to the Concept/Question Board throughout the unit. Students discuss how the unit's selections they have read add to their knowledge of the topic and connect to their research.

Students then decide how they will share their research and findings with the class. Groups work together to publish the class research, as teachers guide students to assign roles within the groups to ensure all students participate. Students share their Inquiry findings—including how

new information, learned through the reading selections and research, changed their conjecture. Student-created presentations will vary, but may include class books, murals, reports, posters, magazine articles, slideshow presentations, plays or skits, debates, photo-documentaries, blog posts, brochures, opinion essays, and experiments featuring student-recorded observations.

The Inquiry Rubrics help teachers assess each student's progress as a researcher and as a member of a collaborative team, as well as the class's progress with Inquiry.

At the end of each unit, students participate in the Theme Wrap-Up and Review. Students take part in a whole-group discussion that focuses on the unit topic, the Big Idea question, and their favorite selections featured within the unit. Students review the student-created Concept/Question Board, highlighting what they learned about the topic, reviewing questions that were answered, and how their ideas have changed since the beginning of the unit. Students may suggest additional questions and ideas they would like to further explore.

The following page numbers indicate locations in the Teacher Edition where you can see the steps of the Inquiry process.

Grade 3: Unit 2, pp. T17, T97, T161, T243, T279, T303, T329

Grade 4: Unit 4, pp. T19, T51, T63, T101, T123, T161, T173, T223, T283, T340

Grade 5: Unit 2, pp. T19, T51, T113, T126, T166, T183, T196, T240, T253, T266, T306, T374, T398

Despite the evidence presented, EdReports reviewers responded in a subjective manner:

- “For all three grades, reviewers determined that the Inquiry project was not the same as a culminating project because it did not *always* lend itself to students demonstrating their knowledge of the unit topic. The inquiry project was about the topic throughout the unit, but students *could have* completed the Inquiry project without completing the unit, which does not integrate knowledge, skills, or standards learned within the unit. Synthesis requires using *all of the learning* within the unit in order to complete a culminating task. The Inquiry project is related to the topic but ultimately a stand-alone experience.”

Gateway 3

Due to a Partially Meets rating for Gateways 1 and 2, this program did not receive a rating for Gateway 3, Instructional Supports and Usability.

McGraw Hill believes that educators using *Open Court Reading* receive best-in-class training and support that helps them implement with fidelity throughout their adoption of the program. Professional development and teacher support is embedded in the teachers' digital platform and print teacher material, including teaching videos, point of use differentiated instruction, and



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