



Reading Assessment

It is important that teachers gather assessment data about student reading in a regular, informal and ongoing fashion in the classroom. Assessment data should primarily be used for planning good instruction for individual students, groups of students or the entire class. Data is needed on reading accuracy and fluency, comprehension and the use of reading strategies. Teachers can do assessments by listening to students read, by observing them during instructional activities based on reading, and by marking their written answers to questions. A helpful tool for assessing accuracy and keeping tabs on how well a student is reading is the running record.

In the classroom, teachers may wish to engage in individual student reading assessments for some of the students only (as this is a time-consuming process) or they may wish to infrequently do a whole class written assessment to get information on how the students are progressing. Although assessment data can be used as the basis for evaluation and reporting, its power lies in the influence it exerts over planning a classroom reading program that meets the needs of the students and moves them from where they are to a realm where they become better readers.

Reading assessments take place every time a teacher listens to a child read, looks at their written answers to comprehension questions or listens to a student's participation in a class discussion. When a teacher has this kind of assessment data, she is better able to plan a reading program. The learning activities may change, the pace may be adjusted, appropriate text can be found, and students may be grouped differently. The reason for ongoing and informal assessments is to better plan instruction.

This section will focus on building the knowledge base that will help teachers make informal classroom assessments. The goal of these reading assessments is to provide information about what individual students need and what the class in general needs in a reading program.

A helpful classroom resource for assessment is:

Reading for Information: A Classroom Assessment Package for whole classes of students in grades 2 to 7. Available from (<http://www.nv44.bc.ca>)

Teacher Hint

Students learn at different rates, therefore groupings may change throughout the year.

Although homogeneous (or ability) groupings are important for Guided Reading, they are not necessarily suitable for other reading activities.





Reading Assessment

What kinds of data do we need to gather (assessment) to know about a student's reading?

- **Comprehension:** In order to determine whether a student understands what they are reading, you need to find out about their thinking. Ask the student to:
 - Predict
 - Re-tell
 - Answer literal and inferential questions
- **Fluency:** A fluent reader decodes well, heeds punctuation, uses appropriate phrasing and keeps an even pace. Assess fluency during oral reading by listening to the student read.
- **Use of reading strategies:** The ability to competently use reading strategies, defines good readers. Some strategies contribute to the reader's comprehension while others focus on decoding. Assess the use of reading strategies by listening to a student's reading, observing behaviour during post-reading discussion and activities, and marking written work.
- **Accuracy:** The reading accuracy rate is the percentage of words read correctly. It is generally determined by doing a running record during an oral reading of a 100 word passage. The number of errors is subtracted from 100 and the remaining number, expressed as a percentage, becomes the student's accuracy rate. An accuracy rate is a helpful for determining what level of text a student is capable of reading. Assess accuracy by taking a running record on the student's oral reading from time to time.

Some helpful questions for reading assessment:

- Is the student rapidly and automatically decoding the words?
- Does the student read fluently with good phrasing?
- Does the student use punctuation cues?
- Is the student's reading speed suitable?
- Does the student read with expression?
- What is the student's comprehension like? At the literal level and at the inferential level?
- Do you think the student understands the text? Why do you think so?

Combining data on these aspects of reading into one picture is not an exact science. No single measure is the determinant of student reading performance but paying attention to these aspects of reading can help the teacher decide on which aspects of the reading program a student might need work.





Reading Assessment

The Running Record: A reading assessment technique

Students who quickly and automatically decode a text probably have an excellent accuracy rate. The reading accuracy rate is the percentage of words read correctly. It is generally determined by doing a running record during an oral reading of a 100 word passage. The number of errors is subtracted from 100 and the remaining number, expressed as a percentage, becomes the student's accuracy rate. Generally speaking, five errors or less or a 95 – 100% accuracy rate signifies reading material that the student can handle independently. Five to ten errors or an accuracy rate of 90 – 94% means that the student must be taught this text. This would be the instructional level of this student. More than ten errors in a hundred words mean that this text is too hard for the student even with support. This is frustration level.

Taking a running record from time to time with children who may be of concern is a good way to keep track of their progress, their difficulties and the grade level of text they can read. It will give you information on the type and frequency of errors a student makes; the kind of reading strategies they use; and the level of support they require. It takes a bit of practice but the only materials you will need are a pencil, a piece of paper and a few minutes time.

1. Give the student a short unseen text that you think he will be able to read.
2. In a 100 word section notate each word read to indicate whether it was read correctly (✓) or incorrectly (✗). Create a percentage accuracy rate following the reading.
3. Check the student's comprehension by asking for a re-tell, and by asking both literal and inferential questions.

A running record is a way that a teacher codes, scores and analyzes the accuracy of a student's oral reading. Running records are often used as elaborate diagnostic tools for reading problems that students may have and often have a complicated system of symbols to record the kinds of errors a student makes. In a busy classroom, this is a difficult task. Reading accuracy is only a small piece of the successful reading profile, so running records should be simple, quick and give a teacher some information. In a classroom they should not be the basis for diagnosing complex reading difficulties. What follows is a simplified version of running record symbols that are useful for the classroom. It should be noted that repeating a word or a phrase or correcting a word or phrase is not considered an error and does not get subtracted from the total of 100.



Reading Assessment

Simplified Running Record Symbols

Accurate	(✓)	
Substitution	(✕)	<u>wrong word</u> right word
Repetition	(↶)	This is not considered an error
Omission	(○)	
Insertion	(^)	
Self Correction	(SC)	This is not considered an error
Teacher Appeal	(TA)	

From Reading for Information: A Classroom Assessment Package Grades 2-7
(<http://www.nvsd44.bc.ca>)

Each line of text gets a line in the running record. It is an option to do the running record right over a matching line of text. The repeats and the self-corrects are not errors. It is recommended that you record the word the child said over the word from the text as you listen but this is often too difficult in a classroom situation. Recording the words the child got wrong at the ends of the lines is a way of going back to check on decoding and meaning. See sample p. 165.

teacher notes





Reading Assessment

Sample:

If a child was reading this 100 word text (down to the underlined “a”):

Jamie and her Grama finished the tea that Jamie’s mother always insisted they drink before going outside to check on the trees.

“Warm inside, warm outside,” Jamie’s mother said.

“You see, Granddaughter,” Grama Bowman said, “that is the way the circle of life goes. You take care of your children when they are little ones and when you get old they will take care of you. And they will tell you what to do too!” The way she said it made everyone smile. Grama Bowman had a way of pursing up her face that would make her look like a little girl.

From Collections 4 Within My Circle p.14 published by Pearson Ed.

And read it like this:

Jamie and her Grama finished the tea that Jamie’s mother always ASKED they drink before going OUT to check on the OLD trees.

“Warm inside, warm outside,” Jamie’s mother said.

“You see, GRAND GRAND GRANDDAUGHTER,” Grama Bowman said, “that is the way the circle THE CIRCLE of life goes. You take care of ____ children when they are little ____ and when you get old they will take care of you. And they will tell you what to do too!” The way she said it made everyone smile. Grama Bowman had a way of PRAISING up her face that would make her look like a

The running record would look like this:

✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓x✓✓✓✓

✓x✓✓✓✓✓^✓

✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

✓✓SC✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

✓[←]R¹✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓○✓✓✓✓✓✓○✓

✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓

✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓✓x✓✓✓✓✓✓

✓✓✓✓✓

insisted

outside
old

granddaughter

the circle
your
ones

pursing

for an accuracy rate of 94%.

This child would be at an instructional level. Understandable vocabulary errors are made because the student probably doesn’t know those words. You would now want to know what this child’s comprehension is like.



Reading Assessment

A Helpful Organizer for Assessing a Student's Reading

Student: _____ Date: _____

Text: _____ Grade Level: _____

I **Before Reading:** (Context)

T:

T: *What do you think will happen in this story/text?*

S:

II **During Reading:** (Accuracy & Fluency)

1. Running Record: (on marked 100 words)

%

2. Use of Reading Strategies:

3. Fluency:

III **After Reading:** (Comprehension)

1. Retell: (ideas, events and information)

2. Inferences and Conclusions

-
-
-





Record Of Reading Behaviour

Name:
Age:
Date: / /

Title:
Series:
Familiar Text: Unfamiliar Text:

Calculations
<p>Accuracy Rate = $\frac{\text{Words correct}}{\text{Total words}} \times 100 =$</p> <p>Student is reading at:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration Level (less than 90%) <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Level (90-94%) <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Level (95-100%)

Understanding from Retelling/Questions
<p>Characters Yes.....No</p> <p>Setting Yes.....No</p> <p>Plot Yes.....No</p> <p>Inferences Yes.....No</p>

Reading Behaviors	
<p>At an unknown word the student:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>After an error, the student:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Observations

Adapted from Depree & Iverson, 1994



Activities and Tools

Activities to Represent Learning

Oral Assessment:

- debate
- game show
- interview
- mock trial
- news report
- oral commentary
- panel discussion
- poem/song
- read-aloud
- role-play/drama
- scenario
- talk show
- travel talk

Written

Assessment:

- character sketch
- commentary
- diary
- editorial
- essay
- instructions
- interview
- letter
- myth (legend, fable, fairy tale)
- news article
- outline
- paragraph

- recipe
- report
- response log/journal
- review (film, t.v., radio, restaurant)
- script
- short story

Visual

Representation:

- advertisement
- artifact
- blueprint
- book jacket/review
- cartoon

- chart
- collage
- crossword
- display
- drawing
- flow chart
- game and board
- graph/table
- graphic organizer
- map/mural
- model
- poster
- scrapbook
- timeline
- video presentation

Assessment Tools

Anecdotal Records

A written record of a teacher's observations. *

Checklist

A list of criteria or behaviours that can be used by the student or the teacher to monitor and assess learning. *

Cloze (Procedure)

A procedure in which words are deleted from a passage and replaced with a blank line. The purpose of the cloze procedure is to demonstrate or assess the use of the syntactic, graphophonic, and semantic cueing systems to predict words that could be inserted in the blanks.

Listening

The practice of listening to student responses and interactions for a variety of reasons, such as level of involvement and level of understanding.

Miscue Analysis

The analysis of errors the student makes when oral reading (e.g. omission of words, substitution of words, insertion of words and repetition of words or phrases).

Observation

The practice of monitoring student behaviour to determine level of performance. *

Performance Standards (Quick Scales)

A detailed rating scale developed by the BC Ministry of Education that describes various levels of reading performance.

Portfolio

A collection of artifacts, such as lists of books read, written or visual representations and oral presentations, that provide an overview of a student's progress.

Reading Conference

A teacher meeting with an individual student to discuss books he/she has read in order to evaluate use of reading strategies, understanding of key ideas, vocabulary, oral fluency, and personal response.

Running Record

A tool for coding, scoring and analyzing a student's miscues while reading aloud. The analysis of running records can inform instruction, evaluation, reporting and grouping. *

Scoring Rubric

A rating scale used to evaluate whether, and to what degree, students have met the established criteria. *

Student Self-Assessment

An opportunity for students to reflect upon their progress and to set new learning goals.

Testing

Formal or informal assessment based on pre-established criteria or on standardized norms.

*Examples in this section



Generic Levels Of Performance

(for Individual and Group Projects and Assignments)

A SUPERIOR (4)

- clearly meets all criteria set out in the instructions
- engages the audience, and is easily understood
- presents a very clear message or main idea
- shows detailed planning and excellent organization
- includes interesting and relevant details
- makes very few, if any, errors in oral/written language structure (e.g. sentence structure, grammar, spelling etc.)
- makes insightful connections between the assignment and life experience, literature and concerns beyond the classroom

B GOOD (3)

- meets all the criteria set out in the instructions
- involves the audience and is easily understood
- presents a message or main idea
- shows careful planning and organization of material
- includes relevant details
- makes few errors in oral/written language structure (e.g. sentence structure, grammar, spelling etc.)
- makes explicit connections between the assignment and life experience, literature and concerns beyond the classroom

C SATISFACTORY (2)

- meets most of the criteria set out in the instructions
- considers the audience and can be understood
- attempts to present a message or main idea
- shows evidence of planning and organization
- includes some details which may not be relevant
- makes some errors in oral/written language structure (e.g. sentence structure, grammar, spelling etc.)
- makes connections between the assignment and life experience and literature

I INCOMPLETE (1)

- meets few criteria set out in the instructions
- fails to consider the audience and is difficult to follow
- fails to include a message or main idea
- shows little planning and lacks organization
- gives few, if any, details
- makes errors in oral/written language structure (e.g. sentence structure, grammar, spelling etc.) which interfere with meaning
- makes few, if any, connections between the assignment and life experience



Planning And Evaluation Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

- 4 Excellent A
- 3 Very Good B
- 2 Acceptable C
- 1 Limited I
- 0 Not Attempted

I. PLANNING: Task, assignment or project: _____

Content or Question Criteria: What is the assignment asking me to do?

-
-
-
-
-

Process and/or Product Criteria: How will I make this excellent?

-
-
-
-
-

Personal Goal:

-
-

2. SELF EVALUATION: 4 3 2 1
 In addition to giving this my best effort, the following are reasons for this grade
 (refer to the criteria) _____

3. REFLECTION: (What I noticed about my learning during this assignment)

4. TEACHER EVALUATION: 4 3 2 1
 Comment _____

