Language Arts Assessment

Language
Reading
Spelling
Written Expression

Overview of assessment
- Talk with previous teacher
- Records review
- Parent interview/questionnaire
- Student observation/checklist
- Student interview/questionnaire

Test options
- Diagnostic
- Achievement
- Criterion-Referenced Test

Language Assessment
- Screening tests
  - Speech-language Pathologist
- Diagnostic tests
  - Speech-language Pathologist
  - Audiologist?
- Informal assessments

Informal language assessment
- Phonology
- Morphology
- Syntax
- Semantics
- Pragmatics

Phonology
- System of rules governing sounds and sound combinations
- Phoneme
  - Unit of sound that combines with other sounds to form words
  - Smallest unit of language
  - Does not convey meaning
  - 40 phonemes in English language
Morphology
- Smallest unit or segment of language that conveys meaning
  - Roots
    - Can stand alone
  - Affixes
    - Bound to roots
    - Suffixes
    - Prefixes

Syntax (aka grammar)
- System of rules governing how words or morphemes are combined to make grammatically correct sentences
  - Word order
  - Sentence organization
  - Relationships between words & word classes or types
  - Other sentence constituents

Semantics
- The meaning of language
  - Individual words
  - Combinations of words
- Language content
  - General objects
  - General actions
  - Relations between objects and events

Pragmatics
- Directive function of speech through which speakers affect the behavior of others in trying to carry out their intention
  - Speaker’s intent
    - Controlling/influencing listener’s action
    - Influencing attitudes
  - Communicative competence

Classroom Based Assessment
“Informal assessment always must be considered an essential part of instruction and therefore should occur simultaneously. [It] often is more useful in determining a child’s literacy strengths and weaknesses…[than more formal assessments].” (Miller)

“90% of assessment takes place in the classroom” (Stiggins).

What’s Left to Learn?
Using Classroom Based Assessments in Early Childhood Literacy Programs

The American Institutes for Research
Council for Exceptional Children
Kansas City, Missouri
April 2001
**Classroom-Based Literacy Assessments**

**Purpose:**
- To inform instruction and to prepare students for standardized testing

**Components:**
- Reading Readiness measures
- Responsive reading and writing measures
- Reading comprehension measures
- Authentic classroom tasks

**Advantages**
- Relevant to what children are learning
- Inclusive and adaptable
- Emphasize the processes of learning
- Supply affective information about reading
- Skills-based learning
- May be formal or standardized

**Disadvantages**
- Not always statistically reliable or valid and therefore, may not meet requirements of school district administration
- Administration requires professional development and support
- Time consuming

**System May Include:**
- Surveys
- Checklists
- Inventories
- Conferences or Interviews

- Authentic Classroom Tasks
- Miscue analysis
- Story retellings
- Writing samples from journals

**Responsive Reading & Writing Measures**

**Developmental/Invented Spelling**
- Spelling activity using standard list of words
- Provides developmental rubrics for scoring

**Sight Word Inventory**
- Word recognition in isolation

**Running Record/Oral Reading**
- Accuracy
- Reading strategies

**Reading Comprehension Measures**

**Listening Comprehension**
- Teacher reads story aloud to small group
- Students privately retell one at a time
- Focus on main events and sequence

**Silent Reading Comprehension**
- Students reads with teacher one-on-one and compete story/text independently
- Students retell in more detail, maybe write
- Students answer story/text specific questions- various levels of text

**Reading Readiness Measures**

**Prerequisite Skills Inventory**
- Rhyming activities
- Sound blending and segmenting
- Letter and sound identification and writing

**Concepts of Print**
- Book handling
- Key print concepts
- Isolating letters and words
- One-to-one matching
**Running Record**
- System of listening to children’s oral reading production and noting deviation from text
- Gives teachers the tools to:
  - observe students’ application of word identification strategies,
  - evaluate students’ fluency and accuracy in oral reading, and
  - determine students’ comprehension of narrative and informational text

**Running Record**
- Can help improve reading instruction by giving teachers a clear sense of:
  - the elements of literacy and informational texts that students understand and remember, and
  - the word identification strategies that students employ.

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**Authentic Classroom Tasks**
- **Purpose**
  - Provide additional information about students’ progress in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing
  - Written tasks provide valuable information about students’ emerging abilities to translate their thinking to written form.
  - Yield two types of information: a holistic score reflecting what students are able to do in response to the task and diagnostic information teachers can use to immediately fine-tune instruction.

**Authentic Classroom Tasks**
- **What is Authentic?**
  - Engaging problems and questions in which students must use knowledge and construct meaning effectively and creatively
  - Simulate the challenges of workers in a field of study or the real life “tests” of civic and personal life in which academic knowledge is required
  - Non-routine and multi-faceted.
  - Require a repertoire of knowledge, and sound judgement in clarifying & solving the problem.

**Authentic Classroom Tasks**
- **Possible formats for tasks include (but are not limited to):**
  - autobiography
  - data table or chart
  - event chain graphic organizer
  - fairy or folk tale
  - friendly letter
  - Journal (fiction or non-fiction)
  - Lab report
  - map
  - model
  - oral report with visuals
  - poem (rap)
  - play
  - recipe
  - scrap book
  - slide show

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**Formal Reading Tests**
- Diagnostic tests
- Achievement tests
- Criterion-referenced tests
Statewide Testing
- Reading
- Literature

Informal reading assessment
- Diagnostics
  - Checklists
- Graded word lists
- Sight word lists
- Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)
- Running records
- Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)
- Portfolio assessment
- Reading Miscue Analysis
- Cloze Procedure

Assessment levels
- Independent level
- Instructional level
- Frustration level

Informal Reading Inventory
- Provides greater understanding of student’s abilities
- May lead to more accurate instruction
- Available in commercial forms
- Teacher-made from classroom materials

Putting together an IRI
- Choose books of varying difficulty
- Excerpts of about 100 - 200 words
- Determine reading level
  - 5 finger approach
  - Publisher’s list
  - Use a software program or other method
- Create comprehension questions

Running records
Running Record Tutorial
Spelling Assessment
- Formal spelling tests
  - Achievement
  - Diagnostic
  - Criterion-referenced

Spelling assessment
- Informal spelling tests
  - Dictated spelling test
  - Informal spelling inventory
  - CBM
  - Spelling error analysis
  - Cloze procedure
  - Modality testing

Handwriting - informal
- Mechanics
- Analysis of writing samples
  - Letter formation
  - Letter size, proportion, & alignment
  - Line quality
  - Slant
  - Rate

Written expression
- Formal
  - Statewide testing
  - Standardized survey of academic achievement
  - Diagnostic
  - Criterion-referenced

Informal written expression
- Fluency
- Syntax
- Vocabulary
- Structure
- Content

Analysis of written expression
- Checklist of written expression
- Writing structure error analysis
- CBM
- Portfolio assessment
- Rubrics