Assessment That Informs Instruction: Don't Just Guess—Assess!
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This handout contains the primary text of the PowerPoint that will be presented during the webinar.

Learning Objectives:
1. Participants will identify elements of effective reading instruction as well as the impact of a visual impairment on reading and writing
2. Participants will describe why monitoring of reading and writing progress is an essential part of teaching.
3. Participants will list various approaches and tools for assessing student progress in braille reading and writing and how they relate to essential elements of reading.
4. Participants will describe strategies for collaborating with classroom teachers to ensure students are making progress in literacy instruction.

What do we know about reading and writing?
National Reading Panel (2000)
- Phonemic awareness
- phonics
- vocabulary
- comprehension
- fluency
• motivation
• use of literature
• writing opportunities
Common Core State Standards
• An effort to bring some uniformity and comparison between states.
• Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics
• http://www.corestandards.org

Students who are college & career ready:
• demonstrate independence
• build strong content knowledge
• respond to varying demands (audience, task, purpose, discipline)
• comprehend and critique
• value evidence
• use technology & digital media capably
• understand other perspectives and cultures
  — from CCSS English Language Arts

Key features of CCSS for ELA
• Reading: text complexity and the growth of comprehension; greater emphasis on informational text especially in upper grades
• Writing: text types, responding to reading, and research
• Speaking and Listening: flexible communication and collaboration
• Language: Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary

What about braille readers?
• Alphabetic Braille-Contracted Braille study (ABC Braille study)
• longitudinal
• originally to look at contraction usage and outcomes for students
• study results gives us information about literacy acquisition for braille readers

D’Andrea. Aug. 2013
Take-away messages from study

- Over the years of the study, only about half of the students maintained or showed expected growth in achievement in vocabulary, spelling, and reading level.
- A higher number of contractions was statistically related to higher achievement in the basic reading inventory in each grade from 1 to 4.

More messages from ABC

- Across reported reading methods (e.g. Patterns, guided reading, other commercial programs, etc.), the scores for reading continuous text (as measured in the Johns Basic Reading Inventory) were poor for students in 1st and 2nd grade.
- By 3rd and 4th grade, the area of most difficulty was in vocabulary (as measured in the Brigance).

More messages from ABC:

- Spelling errors were not related to contractions.
- Reading achievement was positively related to the number of contractions learned.
- Contractions are related to higher braille reading achievement.

We believe that teachers should plan the rate of introduction based on student data.

Biggest message from ABC:

Reading is a process. Overemphasis on braille instruction in isolation can distract from the process of learning to read and write.

Don’t let an overemphasis on the braille code distract us from teaching children to READ and WRITE!
We have work to do!
Difficulties in reading for most students were evident in…
• GAPS IN VOCABULARY which increased with grade level.
• READING LEVEL AND FLUENCY which improved with grade level but lost ground compared to peers over time.
• WRITING PRODUCTIVITY which was limited, and students rarely edited their own writing.

As a TVI, your role is NOT just teaching the braille code. You can make a difference by…
  — Teaching reading along with the classroom team
  — Working within the classroom, with teachers and paraprofessionals
  — Making sure that classrooms are braille accessible

Working with classroom teachers
• If not the teacher of record, at least a co-teacher of reading for braille learners
• Must understand grade level standards
• Must have high expectations for students to be on grade level
• Must consider how students can get timely and accurate feedback
• Don’t assume student is making progress—assess for strengths and needs
• Clear communication with teacher and team

Collaboration & Communication: Instruction
• Discuss with teachers and parents the goals of instruction.
• Schedule instruction, including amount of participation in classroom activities.

• Create a communication plan.

• Discuss and plan for ongoing assessment of literacy learning.

• Everyone has a role to play!

What do good readers do?
• automatically recognize words
• sound out words they don’t know
• comprehend as they read
• connect ideas while they read
• anticipate and make inferences
• monitor themselves
• ask questions & remember
• use strategies meaningfully
• have goals for reading
• read aloud with expression
• read different texts differently
• read for pleasure & learning

Why do literacy assessment?
• “Political” realities of the times
• To understand student development
• Determine effectiveness of program
• Helps develop IEP goals
• Keeps track of student progress
• Guides instruction
• Motivate students

Helps answer these questions:
• Where is the student functioning?
• What is the next step in instruction
• What instructional methods work best for this student at this time?

Assessment is a process, not a product!

Importance of progress monitoring
• Use of running records to monitor growth and document needs
• Use of commercial assessments as well as informal, teacher-made
• Helps team pinpoint specific needs so as to best plan for instruction

Always ask yourself:
• What reading/writing processes are we assessing?
• What is important to pay attention to when assessing this child’s reading and writing—and why?

Meeting the needs of diverse readers:
  First consider the following:
  — consistency of reading instruction
  — amount of instruction
  — method of reading instruction
  — classroom environment
  — careful diagnostic assessment
  — individual strengths
  — Individual challenges

Information to gather: Does the child . . .
• Activate prior knowledge
• Search & gather info
• Check & confirm
• Match voice/text
• Use flexible strategies
• Predict
• Make connections
• Read silently with comprehension
• Pose questions while reading
• Make inferences
• Monitor for meaning
• Read fluently with prosody
• Identify main idea and details
• summarize
• Critique, evaluate

Informal literacy assessments for TVIs:
• observation
• cloze procedure
• interviews
• interest inventories
• vocabulary knowledge
• journals
• samples
• portfolios
• informal reading inventories
• miscue analysis
• retelling

Observations
• Critically important, and often overlooked
• Keeping notes about students’ reading performance
• Ideas: ORF, strategies used, comprehension, retelling, comments student made, likes & dislikes, things to share with parents & classroom teacher, etc.
• Helps in developing quarterly reports & IEPs

Cloze and maze procedures
• Passage on child’s independent or instructional level & remove every 7th word
• Child reads passage & asked to guess what missing word might be
• Maze assessment is similar, except child is given three words to choose from that might fit in the blank.

**Interviews and questionnaires**
• Child interviews
• Parent interviews
• Classroom teacher interviews
• Can make your own or find them online

**Example:**
Directions: Read each of the 10 statements about reading. Circle the response that tells what you feel or believe.
YES NO 1. Reading is a good way to spend spare time.
YES NO 2. Most books are too long and boring.
YES NO 3. There should be more free reading in school.
YES NO 4. Reading is fun.
YES NO 5. I learn from reading.
YES NO 6. I would rather read than watch television.
YES NO 7. Teachers ask me to read books that are too hard.
YES NO 8. I am not a very good reader.
YES NO 9. I read for fun at least once a day.
YES NO 10. I have my own braille books at home to read for fun.

**Interest inventories**
• Questionnaires specific to likes and dislikes
• Can develop specifically for reading
• Can find online or develop your own
• Ask about genres and general interests
Example
Circle the answers that apply to you and fill in the blanks.
1. I most like to read:
   - mystery
   - humor
   - adventure
   - sports
   - fantasy
   - history
   - animals
   - space
   - biography
   - science fiction
   - poetry
   other__________
2. I don’t like to read about ___________________.
3. My favorite book so far is ___________________.
4. My favorite author so far is ___________________.
4. I like to read because _________________________.
5. Outside of school I read:
   - Every day
   - once a week
   - once a month
   - almost never
6. I use the library:
   - Every day
   - once a week
   - once a month
   - almost never

Vocabulary Knowledge Scale
Wesche & Paribakht (1996)
• I don’t remember having seen this word before.
  (1 point)
• I have seen this word before, but I don’t think I know what it means. (2 points)
• I have seen this word before, and I think it means ___________. (Synonym or translation; 3 points)
• I know this word. It means _________.
  (Synonym or translation; 4 points)
• I can use this word in a sentence: _____________.
  (If you do this section, please also do category 4; 5 points).

Journals
• Many different kinds
• Reading journal or log
• Dialog journal with student
• Allows student to practice writing skills as well as reading
• Sensitivities regarding journals
Periodic work samples
• Collect and organize work samples quarterly
• Choose a variety of samples to reflect the variety of learning
• Share with parents and classroom teacher
• Share with next year’s teacher

Portfolios
• Samples are chosen by student
• Allows student to reflect and self-monitor progress
• Great to share with family and other teachers; child can present him/herself

Informal reading inventories
• graded word lists, graded passages with comprehension questions, ORF
• usually combined with miscue analysis
• can be commercially made or teacher made
• find independent, instructional, and frustration levels

Functioning Levels (Approximate)
• Independent Level:
  o Word knowledge 95-99%
  o Comprehension 90% or above
• Instructional Level:
  o Word knowledge 90-95%
  o Comprehension 75-90%
• Frustration Level:
  o Word knowledge below 90%
  o Comprehension 75% or below

Information to gather from IRIs
• Insight into processes and strategies children use as they read
• Examine word attack skills
• Word recognition skills
• Reading rate and accuracy
• Comprehension: details, inferences
• Metacognition and monitoring

Commercial IRIs
• Analytical Reading Inventory, 9th Edition (Woods & Moe, 2010)
• Bader Reading and Language Inventory, 7th Edition (Bader, 2013)
• **Basic Reading Inventory, 11th edition (Johns, 2012)** *
• Classroom Reading Inventory, 12th Edition (Wheelock & Campbell, 2011)
• Comprehensive Reading Inventory, 2nd Edition (Cooter, Flynt, & Cooter, 2013)
• Informal Reading Inventory, 8th Edition (Roe & Burns, 2010)
• Qualitative Reading Inventory, 5th Edition (Leslie & Caldwell, 2010)
• Critical Reading Inventory, 2nd Edition (Applegate, Quinn, Applegate, 2008)

* 10th Edition BRI available in braille from TSBVI.edu (see their Assessment Kit)

General steps for IRI
• Select word lists & passages (or use commercial IRI)
• Prepare passage for you and student
• Record and time student reading
• Mark miscues
• Ask child to retell; ask comprehension questions
• Look for syntactic & semantic acceptability
Miscue analysis
• Why “miscue” rather than “mistake”?
• What miscues to look for:
  — substitutions
  — omissions
  — insertions
  — transposition
  — repetition & corrections
Some inventories do not count hesitations, omissions of lines of text, or missed punctuation; I make note of them for our students.

Coding miscues
• Purpose of coding is to reconstruct how the student read the text
• Gives a convenient and consistent way of marking what the student did
• With a consistent system, you can then analyze the student’s reading and look for patterns
• Remember that braille miscues may not “look” like print miscues

Miscue analysis
• Does the miscue change meaning?
  o If not, it’s semantically acceptable within the context of the sentence
• Does the miscue sound like language?
  o If so, it’s syntactically acceptable within the context of the sentence
• Does the miscue and the text look and sound alike?
  o If so, they have high graphic-phonemic similarity
Look for Acceptability of Miscues
• Miscues are not considered “significant”
  — If the meaning does not change
  — If they are self-corrected
  — If they are part of the child’s dialect
  — If the child figures it out later in the passage
• Miscues are considered “significant”:
  — If the meaning of the sentence changes
  — If a nonword is used
  — If a partial word is used
  — If the word is provided to student

Oral reading fluency (ORF)
• Formula given on most commercial IRIs
• Can time student reading passage of set number of words
• Can do 1 minute timings, 5 minute timings, 10 minute timings; can do orally or silently
• Count words correctly read for wcpm
• Divide number of words read by number of seconds needed to read, and multiply by 60 to get wcpm
• We do not have norms for visually impaired readers

Retelling
• Part of reading comprehension assessment
• Retelling elements can be scored in a rubric
• Elements usually included are:
  — story setting
  — characters
  — goal or initiating event
  — problem or episodes
  — solution
  — resolution or ending
Assessment Tips:
• Involve others in the assessment process
• Encourage student to self-evaluate
• Follow student over time & get multiple measures
• Develop an understanding of reading/writing process
• Keep accurate and detailed notes & records
• Note ORF, vocabulary, decoding info, hand movements, etc.

Consider this:
“In the context of assessment, inquiry is the process of asking questions, looking beneath and beyond the surface of scores and evidence of all types, and interrogating the student, the instruction, and oneself as a teacher and learner. Its essence is curiosity and openness to possibilities as well as the ability to be deliberate in searching for understanding.”

--Valencia, S. W., in Paratore & McCormack’s Classroom Literacy Assessment