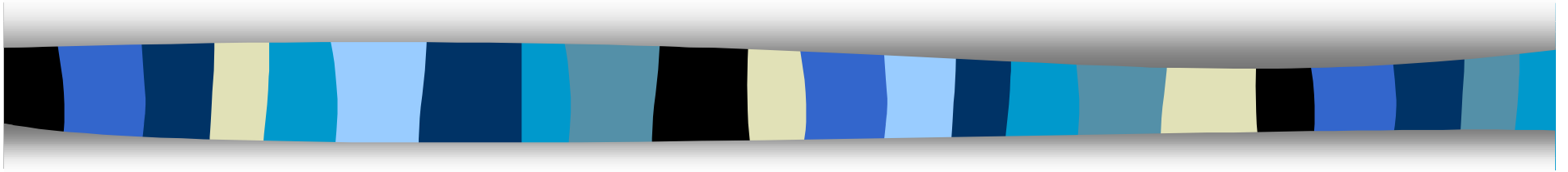
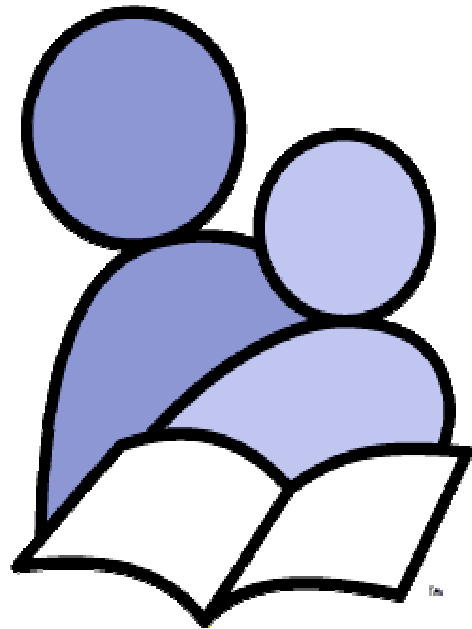


Assessing Children's Reading Achievement in Grades K-4



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Balanced Literacy Programs

Why is “Balance” a key term for designing language arts programs?

Because:

- More emphasis on phonics instruction
- Compromise between whole language and direct instruction approaches
- Coherence within and between grades
- Alignment with State Standards



Balance Across Multiple Dimensions (MLPP)

- Balanced Environment
- Balanced Content
- Balanced Responsibility
- Balanced Variety
- Balanced Instruction
- Balanced Assessment



Balanced Instruction: PreK-1

Print-Sound Code

- Alphabet
- Letter sounds
- Phonological awareness
- Concepts about print
- Oral language & vocabulary

Getting Meaning

- Joint book reading
- Story telling
- Picture book comprehension
- Listening comprehension
- Dictated stories



Balanced Instruction: 1-3

Code Emphasis

- Sight words
- Phonological awareness
- Oral reading fluency
- Repeated reading
- Daily spelling
- Daily writing
- Modeled strategies

Meaning Emphasis

- Comprehension Qs: literal, inferential, critical
- Retellings & summaries
- Narrative structure
- Main ideas & details
- Genre features
- Writing in response to reading



Balanced Instruction: 3-8

Direct instruction of: Active participation in:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ■ Comprehension strategies | ■ Metacognitive discussions |
| ■ Revising strategies | ■ Book clubs |
| ■ Study strategies | ■ Writers' circle |
| ■ Test-taking strategies | ■ Reciprocal teaching |
| ■ Motivational strategies | ■ Extended personal reports: research, read, write, present |



Balanced Assessment: PreK-3

Code Emphasis

- Oral language
- Letter-sound relations
- Phonemic awareness
- Concepts about print
- Decodable words
- Oral reading fluency
- Grammar & Language Conventions

Meaning Emphasis

- Listening & picture comprehension
- Question answering
- Retellings/summaries
- Writing to prompts
- Expressive speaking & writing
- Journals



Balanced Assessment: 3-8

Summative

- Multiple-choice tests
- Unit tests
- Projects
- Standardized tests
- Writing to rubrics
- Report cards
- High stakes tests

Formative

- Performance assessments
- Writing for different purposes and audiences
- Self-assessments
- Conferences
- Portfolios



Difficulties in Designing Balanced Literacy Programs

- Program needs to be fabric not threads
- Teachers need coherent theories about literacy development
- Materials must embody multiple and balanced activities
- Assessment & instruction must be aligned
- Too many children; too many levels; not enough time



Necessary Teacher Supports

- Principal's leadership
- Early identification & continuous assessment of struggling readers
- Remedial programs at K-3 with intensive one-on-one tutoring
- Tutors & volunteers in classrooms
- Family involvement
- Staff development



Assessment Tools

- Standardized Tests
- Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs)
- Performance Assessments (MLPP)
- Work Samples and Portfolios



One Standardized Test: Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests

- Level PRE
 - Literacy Concepts, Reading Instruction & Relational Concepts, Oral Language Concepts, Letter-Sound Correspondences
- Level R
 - Beginning Consonants, Final Consonants, Vowels, Use of Context
- Levels 1, 2, 3
 - Vocabulary, Comprehension, Total



Pros & Cons of Standardized Tests

Benefits

- Group administered in 1-2 hours
- Multiple forms for pre & post testing
- Subscores and scaled scores
- Administrators want/expect standardized test

Liabilities

- Young children unfamiliar with format
- Children distressed
- Not aligned with curricula & instruction
- May measure ability not achievement



Components of IRIs & Derived Measures

- Graded Word lists
- Reading Time
- Fluency Ratings
- Miscues or Running Records
- Self-Corrections
- Propositions Recalled & Retellings
- Comprehension Questions
- Narrative & Expository text (QRI)



Oral Reading Measures

Benefits

- Aligned with daily instruction
- Multiple measures of fluency & comprehension collected simultaneously
- Diagnostic immediately

Liabilities

- Requires expertise to administer & interpret
- Requires multiple passages to assess reading level
- Accuracy (i.e., running records & miscues) are insufficient by themselves
- Teachers may “teach” the commercial materials



MLPP Performance Assessments

Milestone Tasks

- Oral reading fluency
- Comprehension
- Writing
- Attitudes & Self-Perceptions



MLPP Performance Assessments

Digging Deeper Assessments for Beginning Readers

- Phonemic Awareness - segmentation & blending
- Hearing and Recording Sounds
- Known Words
- Sight Words/Decodable Words



MLPP Performance Assessments

Digging Deeper Assessments *for Non-readers*

- Oral language
- Phonemic Awareness - rhyming
- Letter-sound identification
- Concepts About Print



Work Samples & Portfolios

- Collect daily work samples
- Evaluate against standards or checklists
- Gather students' self-assessments
- Discuss with students & families
- Assign grade/level/standard to work



Evaluation Research Problems

- Individual assessment requires time from child, teacher, and evaluator
- Testing requires expertise and \$\$
- Tasks need to be administered in uniform manner by different people
- Battery of tests requires interpretation
- Evaluation needs to be connected to ongoing programs of assessment & instruction



Design Problems with Treatments

- Treatments vary by school, grade, teacher, and children
- Large teacher differences and teacher x treatment interactions
- Ss not randomly assigned
- Hawthorne effects - both positive & negative
- Diverse etiology of reading problems
- Cost factors > curricula factors
- Assessments do not match curricula & instruction at each site
- What effects are significant/practical/meaningful?



Design Problems with Controls

- Not random; rarely equivalent
- What did they experience?
- Need to equate groups or match Ss - is it feasible? possible? cost-effective?
- What if Controls improve also? Is no gain bad or no loss good relative to peers?



Problems With Assessment Tasks

- Are tasks valid and reliable?
- Are tasks aligned with curricula & treatment?
- How do you reconcile changes on some measures and not others?



Questions About Designs

- Traditional Pre-Post x Exp-Control design may be inadequate & impractical
- Need to examine the fit between assessment tasks and curriculum in each program
- Need to develop alternative designs
- Need to show who makes progress on what aspects of literacy
- Need to show short & long term effects



Practical Concerns & Models

- Schools need practical evaluation methods:
 - Limited budgets & time for evaluation
 - Accountability to parents & administration in practical terms
 - Small nonrandom samples; no comparable control Ss
 - Idiosyncratic curricula
 - Variable teacher expertise
 - Longitudinal improvement more important than comparative achievement