

*How Do You Know They
Understand the Text?*

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*With the collaboration of many
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How Do You Know They Understand the Text?

Question of Comprehension

- Begs for definition & standards
- Presumes comprehension is a stable ability
- Comprehension may depend on text level, prior knowledge, vocabulary, genre, and interest
- Comprehension depends on decoding skills and strategies for constructing meaning
- Comprehension assessments vary in sensitivity by skill, age, and measure

How Do You Know They Understand the Text?

Question of Instruction

- What were children taught?
- How were children taught?
- How similar are assessment and instruction?

Acknowledge Complexity But...

Consider some typical ways to assess and report children's reading comprehension.

- Observation
- Anecdotal records
- Answering questions about text
- Retelling
- Writing in response to text
- Discussion groups

The Usual Informal Practices

- Humbug! Say the critics
- Too subjective, not quantitative
- Need hard data
 - To measure growth
 - To show achievement
 - To compare schools

Some Options for Assessing Young Children's Comprehension

- Informal Reading Inventories
- Comprehension of Picture Books
- Strategic Reading
- Cloze tasks
- State-designed assessment batteries
- Commercial products

Informal Reading Inventories (IRIs)

- Examples: QRI, BRI, DRA
- IRIs can include:
 - Oral reading accuracy measures
 - Miscues or running records
 - Fluency ratings
 - Reading rate
 - Retelling
 - Rubrics or propositions or main ideas
 - Comprehension questions
 - Implicit and explicit questions
 - Graded Word lists

Need to Collect Information

- From multiple passages & levels
- From multiple genres
- From multiple word lists
- From silent reading for children reading at grade 4 and above because
 - Comprehension and accuracy unrelated for many children
 - Silent reading allows look backs & strategies
 - Silent reading avoids social anxiety

What Data Should Be Collected for Children in Grades K-3?

- Reading rate
- Oral reading accuracy
- Fluency ratings
- Comprehension questions
- Retelling

IRIs Are Diagnostic When Teachers

- Interpret patterns of oral reading miscues & self-corrections
- Identify difficulties answering specific questions or retelling information
- Use results for conferences with children (e.g., retrospective miscue analysis)
- Align reading materials and instruction with children's needs

How Can We Report Reading Progress & Achievement?

- Pre-Post gain scores on same passages
- Increasing levels of text mastery
- IRT growth scores

All can be aggregated by classroom and school and reported as Gain/No Gain or Text Level/Standard met.

How Can We Assess Comprehension In Children Who Cannot Decode Text?

- Picture Book task to assess narrative comprehension
- Listening comprehension

The Narrative Comprehension Task

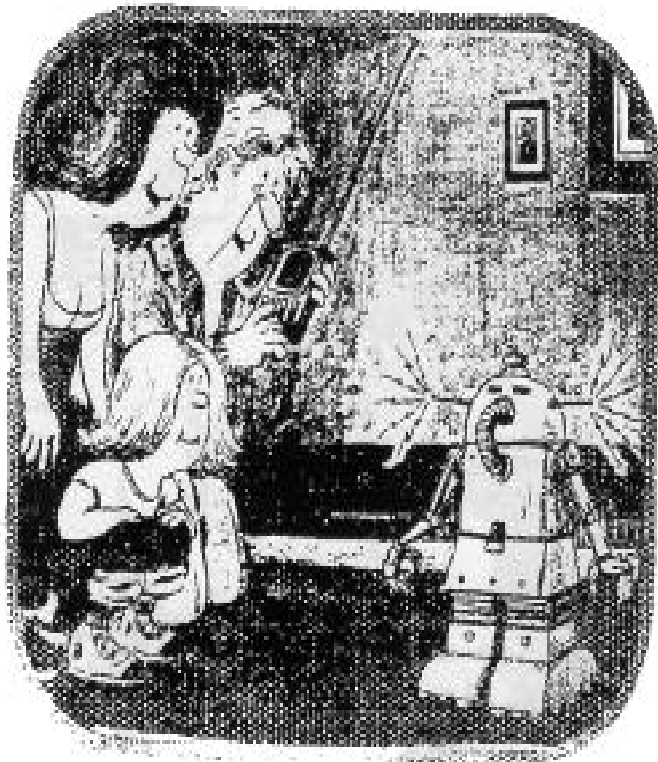
- measures emergent readers' narrative comprehension skills
- does not require decoding skills
- is “authentic” because it is based on picture books

A Wordless Picture Book

Robot-Bot-Bot, by Fernando Krahn

- Clear story line with main elements of stories, black line drawings, no words
- Adapted version:
 - Spiral bound 18-page book
 - Omits unnecessary pictures

ROBOT-BOT-BOT



Fernando Krahn



NC Task Part 1: Picture Walk

- Observational scheme: Five types of behaviors
 1. Book handling skills
 2. Engagement
 3. Picture comments
 4. Storytelling comments
 5. Comprehension strategies
- Scoring
 - 0-1-2 point rubric
 - 0-10 point Picture Walk scale

Part 2: Retelling

- Story elements included in retellings:
 1. Setting
 2. Characters
 3. Goal/initiating event
 4. Problem/episodes
 5. Solution
 6. Resolution/ending
- Scoring
 - 0-6 point Retelling scale

Part 3: Prompted Comprehension

Explicit Information

- Characters
- Setting
- Initiating event
- Problem
- Outcome resolution

Implicit Information

- Feelings
- Causal inference
- Dialogue
- Prediction
- Theme

NC Task Research Shows

- Developmental improvement with age
- Readers score better than nonreaders
- Easy and reliable to administer

Concurrent Validity

Relationships with variables for nonreaders (MLPP)

- NC Comp and Phonemic Awareness, $r=.33^{**}$
- NC Comp and Hearing & Recording Sounds, $r=.33^{**}$
- NC Comp and Concepts about Print, $r=.44^{**}$

Relationships with variables for readers (QRI-II)

- NC Retell and QRI Comp, $r=.27^*$
- NC Retell and QRI Retell, $r=.26^*$

Predictive Validity

ITBS Comp

NC Picture Walk .30*

NC Retelling .46**

NC Comp Total .52**

Implications

The NC Task...

Is developmentally appropriate and has diagnostic sensitivity

Yields quantitative data for measuring growth and achievement

Can be used interchangeably for both assessment and instruction

Strategic Reading: TAPs

Think Along Passages assess:

- Comprehension - 5 questions
- Metacognition - 5 questions
- With Narrative and Expository genres
- With 6 page little books

Example: Narrative Grade 3

A Magic Meeting for Kevin



Kevin stared down at the rings in his hands. Then he read directions from his magic kit for the forty-second time. “Position rings with openings lined up on the right. Then twist rings. Use a flick of the wrist, as shown in the picture. Rings should come apart.” Kevin lined up the openings on his rings. Then he twisted them just like the picture showed. The rings did not come apart.



TAP Score Sheet

- Single page with questions, prompts, and possible answers
- Scores range from:
 - 0-5 for Comprehension
 - 0-5 for Metacognition
- Task can be given in 10 minutes per passage
- Information about comprehension of Explicit/Implicit questions, text searching, and strategy awareness

TAPs

- Provide comprehension scores for texts of various difficulty and genre
- Provide insights and scores about strategies used while reading
- Can be used for either assessment or instruction

Cloze Reading Tasks

- Missing words
 - Blank spaces or
 - Multiple options to choose
- Can be created from regular curriculum
- Improvement can be measured on same passages or different levels
- Can be used for assessment or instruction

Some Commercial Reading Tasks for Group Administration in K-5

- Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) based on multiple-choice cloze task & leveled passages
- Gates-MacGinitie Reading tests based on multiple-choice pictures or text for enabling skills, Word Identification, Vocabulary, and Text Comprehension
- Standardized tests, e.g., ITBS, SAT-9 based on multiple-choice & constructed response

State Designed Reading Batteries

- Michigan Literacy Progress Profile(MLPP)
 - K-3 Milestone tasks (5) and Enabling tasks (6)
- Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI)
 - K-2 tasks focus on:
 - Book and Print Awareness
 - Phonemic Awareness
 - Oral Reading Accuracy & Fluency
 - Listening & Reading Comprehension

MLPP & TPRI Are

- Child-focused & teacher controlled
- Designed for individual, diagnostic, early assessment of multiple reading skills
- Not easily used for summative reporting

Teachers' Choices of Reading Assessments Depend on:

- Purpose and use of information
- Familiarity with task and training
- Alignment with instruction
- Usefulness for parents and students

Administrators' Choices of Assessments Depend On:

- Clarity/simplicity of quantitative data
- Cost effectiveness
- Comparability across classrooms and schools
- Alignment with curriculum & standards

Enduring Issues

- Tension between classroom usefulness and district accountability
- Comprehension assessments vary in type and sensitivity with increasing age & skill
- Easy to assess skills are not necessarily the most important accomplishments
- Comprehension is variable and more difficult to assess than lower level skills
- Simplified assessments lead to narrow instruction