



Pearson New International Edition

Instructing Students
Who Have Literacy Problems
Sandra McCormick Jerry Zutell
Sixth Edition

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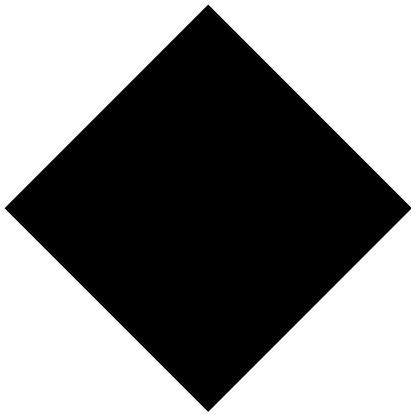


Applying What You've Learned. Teachers know that one of the best ways to learn something is to teach it to someone else. Select one of the assessment procedures described in this chapter and assume you are going to teach someone to prepare, administer, and score this assessment. What specific details would you have to convey?



Now go to Topic 2: “Reading Assessment” and to Topic 10: “Reading and Writing” in the MyEducationLab (www.myeducationlab.com) for your course, where you can:

- Find learning outcomes along with national standards that connect to these outcomes.
- Complete Assignments and Activities that can help you more deeply understand the chapter content.
 - Go to the Assignments and Activities section of Topic 2 and complete the activity titled “Definition and Demonstration of a Running Record.” As you watch the video and answer the accompanying questions, think about how the running record differs from the RMI and the IRI.
 - Go to the Assignments and Activities section of Topic 2 and complete the activity titled “Baseline Fluency Assessment.” As you watch the video and answer the accompanying questions, consider what actions the teacher takes as the student reads.
 - Go to the Assignments and Activities section of Topic 10 and complete the activity titled “Spelling Practice.” As you watch the video and answer the accompanying questions, think about the five stages of spelling development as presented on pages 148–149.



Assessment for Identifying Specific Strengths and Weaknesses in Reading: Part II



David Mager/Pearson Learning Photo Studio

Reading specialists often begin their first session with a student by conducting an interest inventory; this helps the student to relax, and, also, provides guidance for future lessons.

From Chapter 6 of *Instructing Students Who Have Literacy Problems*, 6/e. Sandra McCormick. Jerry Zutell. Copyright © 2011 by Pearson Education. All rights reserved.

Continuing the topic of Chapter 5, this chapter further describes assessment procedures for determining specific strengths and weaknesses in reading.



Make an Outline. As with the previous chapter, many tests and other assessment procedures are reviewed in Chapter 6. To distinguish them and their different purposes and characteristics, again, start an outline. Use the headings and subheadings in this chapter as a beginning to frame your outline.

ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE OF WORD MEANINGS

Formal Measures

Knowledge of word meanings is an important aspect of comprehension. Although most standardized survey tests contain sections on meaning vocabulary, these subtests do not provide a wholly adequate measure of students' word-meaning knowledge. There are several reasons for this. First, because of poor sight vocabulary or underdeveloped word identification strategies, a student may not recognize some test words in their written form—even though the student knows their meanings when these words are used in oral language. Furthermore, most survey tests measure only common word meanings, ignoring multiple meanings of the same words. Finally, vocabulary items included on such tests represent a very small sample of words.

Nonetheless, a student's general performance on these survey tests can provide clues about whether it is necessary to administer a follow-up diagnostic test of word meanings. If the student has performed poorly on a group standardized survey test, the teacher is advised to read words from this test *to* the student and informally check his or her knowledge of their meanings. If, under these conditions, the student performs well, the original poor performance likely has a different basis; that is, the culprit probably is not a deficient meaning vocabulary, but lack of word identification strategies. To further investigate this possibility, a criterion-referenced test battery that may be useful is the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading with Trial Teaching Strategies (DARTTS) (see **Test Bank F** in Chapter 5), which includes a *listening* subtest of meaning vocabulary.

If, on the other hand, the student performs poorly during the oral follow-up probe with the standardized survey test, more in-depth assessment is advisable. If desired, there are diagnostic tests of specific skills available for this follow-up. One is the Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC). This test assesses vocabulary related to common concepts, as well as words related to several content areas (science, social studies, and math) and also vocabulary necessary for reading directions in school work.

Informal Measures

Follow-up assessment of meaning vocabulary also can be undertaken in a number of informal ways. For example, teacher-constructed measures, such as the *knowledge-rating graph* (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2010) seen in Figure 6–1, can be devised to measure general vocabulary or, as in this case, common topics addressed in school. One of the graphs illustrated in Figure 6–1 is designed to assess meaning vocabulary before a selection is read and the other afterward to determine how satisfactorily a student develops word meanings from context and concepts of a selection.

In addition, teachers may compile a file of test forms for each grade level. To develop such a file, the first step is deciding on the content for every level. The *general content* should involve items that measure not only synonyms for words but also multiple meanings.

FIGURE 6–1 *Before and After Knowledge Ratings*

Before Reading–Knowledge Rating			
Check your knowledge level for each of these terms.			
Term	3 Can Define/Use	2 Heard It	1 Don't Know
tipi	✓		
villa		✓	
casa colonica			✓
apartment	✓		
high rise		✓	
dascha		✓	
trullo			✓
dishambe			✓
lean-to		✓	
yurt			✓

After Reading–Knowledge Rating					
Term	Rating	Locale	People	Describe	Questions
tipi	3	U.S. Plains	Native American		
villa	3	Mediterranean	Rich Romans, Italian	Large House	
dascha	3	Russia	Peasants-Rich	big house	
trullo	2	Sardinia	?	Not Sure	are they like tipis?
yurt	2	?	Nomads		How can it be felt?

Source: From *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms* (4th ed.) (p. 141) by C. Blachowicz and P. Fisher, 2010, Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc., Upper Saddle River, NJ.

A number of sources for words may be useful in preparing informal measures of meaning-vocabulary knowledge.

Decisions about the *specific content* involve selecting which words to test. A sample of words may be obtained from one or more of the following sources:

1. *The Living Word Vocabulary* (Dale & O'Rourke, 1976), which provides a listing of approximately 44,000 words with a grade level specified for each that indicates the level at which the meaning of that word is known by most students.
2. Word lists from basal readers beginning at grade 4. (Words introduced in basal readers prior to grade 4 are generally selected because they are words that are in the oral language meaning vocabularies of most children; the task in these early years is one of getting students to recognize these known words in printed form. Beginning at grade 4, an additional objective is to introduce words for which meanings must also be learned.)
3. Lists of frequently occurring affixes and roots. One such source is Stauffer's (1969) list of the 15 most frequently occurring prefixes in the English language.
4. Lists of content area words, such as the Carroll, Davies, and Richman list for grades 3 through 9 (Carroll, Davies, & Richman, 1971).

The next step in developing an informal assessment instrument is to choose a *method* of assessing the words. Kelley and Krey (cited in Farr, 1969, p. 34) suggested one or more of the following methods.

- I. Unaided recall
 - A. Checking for familiarity
 - B. Using words in a sentence
 - C. Explaining the meaning
 - D. Giving a synonym
 - E. Giving an opposite
- II. Aided recall
 - A. Recall aided by recognition
 1. Matching tests
 2. Classification tests
 3. Multiple-choice tests
 - a. Choosing the opposite
 - b. Choosing the best synonym
 - c. Choosing the best definition
 - d. Choosing the best use in sentences
 4. Same-opposite tests
 5. Same-opposite-neither tests
 6. Same-different tests
 - B. Recall aided by association
 1. Completion tests
 2. Analogy tests
 - C. Recall aided by recognition and association
 1. Multiple-choice completion tests
 2. Multiple-choice substitution tests

Many educators have expressed concern about the use of multiple-choice items *only* to assess meaning vocabulary. While a word may seem to be known on a multiple-choice item, a student may still lack in-depth understanding because such tests provide an easier task than that required in situations where learners must *use* the word. Functional knowledge of a word's meaning is better

demonstrated when a student can contrast it with a word having a related meaning, give multiple meanings of the word, or explain what a word means in a specific sentence.

Formal or informal tests should be supplemented with observations during daily work to determine a student's need for remediation in the area of meaning vocabulary.



Summarize. What are some issues regarding assessment of word meanings?

ASSESSING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension assessment can be conducted with conventional tests (both formal and informal) or teacher-constructed instruments and procedures. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages.



Make a Prediction. Poor performance on the comprehension section of a standardized survey test is not always an indication of comprehension difficulties. How can teachers tell whether it is or is not?

Using Conventional Tests

Several types of tests have some utility for measuring comprehension.

Formal Assessments. Formal assessments used to evaluate comprehension consist of (a) standardized group survey tests, (b) group-administered diagnostic tests, and (c) individually administered diagnostic tests. When a student exhibits poor reading performance on the *standardized group survey test* employed during assessment for identification, the comprehension section is often examined to determine if comprehension difficulties exist. This is deemed an appropriate means of appraisal because survey tests measure comprehension after silent reading, which is required in most real-life reading tasks.

However, sometimes the use of group survey tests for this purpose is criticized because these tests are timed. Some researchers question whether they measure speed of comprehension rather than power of comprehension. That is, they are concerned that a student with a slower than average rate of reading (e.g., because of word recognition difficulties or for other reasons) may be penalized, even though the student's comprehension is adequate when the student has all the time needed to complete a reading task. In such cases, these tests would not give a true reflection of the student's comprehension abilities.

Nevertheless, if other diagnostic tests have indicated that a student has no difficulty with word recognition and word identification strategies, then the time limits of these tests should be sufficient for students to complete them. Therefore, if the student cannot complete the comprehension subtest, that likely indicates comprehension difficulty. If, on the other hand, a student has poor word knowledge skills, an alternate form of the survey test at the same level can be administered for diagnostic purposes after completion of the original

Readministering an alternate form of a standardized comprehension test, informally and orally, may allow determination if poor performance has resulted from word recognition difficulties, comprehension problems, or both.