ACTIVE YOUNG READERS
GRADES PRIMARY–3
ASSESSMENT RESOURCE

Active Young Readers

NOVA SCOTIA

A TEACHING RESOURCE

Active Young Readers
Grades Primary–3
Assessment Resource

Contents

Introduction

The Active Young Readers, Grades Primary–3, Assessment Resource Package, is a central component of Nova Scotia's focus on literacy. The assessment resource package is intended to offer support to teachers in two areas: **effective instruction** and **effective assessment**.

Understanding students as readers is a complex task, but one that is essential to providing quality, focused instruction in reading. It is through the assessment process that teachers come to know their students better as readers and as learners. Teachers learn what students like to read, how they see themselves as readers, and which strategies they use when reading various kinds of texts for various purposes.

With this understanding, teachers can support students in making appropriate book choices and in becoming more strategic readers. Identifying what the student has under control helps teachers to make decisions about what needs to be explicitly taught to students as a whole group, to small groups of students, and to individual students. Assessment information helps teachers know when to provide enrichment and further challenge, and when to intervene and provide additional support.

This assessment resource package is intended to be practical, and to encourage and support assessment and instructional practices that are consistent with the Active Young Readers project and the Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum.

Planning and Organizing for Assessment in Reading

The purposes of assessment in reading are to help students expand their reading abilities and to help teachers provide effective instruction for each student. Classroom-based assessment of student progress in reading takes place every day in a variety of ways. To effectively assess their students in reading, teachers need to

- understand their students as readers
- understand and use effective assessment tools
- use their assessments to design effective instruction

Using the Active Young Readers, Grades Primary–3, Assessment Resource Package

There was a time when all I worried about was if the students in my class were reading at grade level. Now I look for so much more. I have learned that while it is important to know what level of text the students can read with understanding, it is also important to look at what they can do as readers and to help them to become better. Using the Active Young Readers, Grades Primary–3, Assessment Resource Package has helped me to understand the characteristics of young readers and then tailor my instruction to meet their needs. Using this resource, I also learned to use a variety of observations to support my instruction.

~ grade 1 pilot teacher

Teacher Voices: Finding Time to Assess throughout the Day, in Reading Workshop and Beyond

In my grade 3 classroom I generally administer running/reading records for assessment during independent reading time. This takes place after the first few months of school as expectations must be set for independent reading. Students are aware of what they should be reading while I administer either these assessments or guided reading groups. This can be done during buddy reading once the ground rules and routines have been established as well. Students often look forward to the chance to read to me. Other times I have found can be during a quiet activity.

~ grade 3 teacher

Both the *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades Primary–3* and the *Active Young Readers, Grades Primary–3, Assessment Resource: A Teaching Resource* provide substantial and detailed support for teachers in the assessment of reading.

Key messages in classroom-based reading assessment are as follows:

- Teachers must understand the reading process and the stages of reading development.
- Teachers must help students become aware of the supports and challenges in text.
- Teachers must use a wide range of assessment tools to gather information about their students.
- Students must understand themselves as readers.
- Assessment must be frequent and built into daily experiences rather than added on close to reporting time.
- Effective assessment includes **conversations** with students, **observations** (formal and informal), as well as written **product**.

One of the challenges for teachers is the organization and management of assessment data. Some suggestions for keeping the data organized are as follows:

- sticky notes, which can be added to teacher notebooks later (put date on them for quick reference)
- notebook for each student (could be kept in plastic bins in groups)
- clipboard with class list
- index cards, taped and layered (put student's name on the bottom, arrange on a clipboard, and flip to a particular student as needed)
- binders—one for reading, one for writing, with pages dedicated for each student
- monthly checklist for running records and writing samples to be sure all students are being represented
- portfolios that are created through student decision making and teacher support
- spreadsheets
- Project management software such as the PowerTeacher Gradebook

In most cases, these suggestions work equally well for any curriculum area.

Guided Reading Notes

When the students are involved in independent reading, writing, or other curriculum explorations, and by showing the students how to take responsibility for more classroom procedures, and building their stamina for independence, teachers can find more time to **observe**, have **conversations**, or organize **products** and work samples.

Observations

Assessment
for and *of*
Learning

Conversations   Products

Check It Out

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Reading.* Addison Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 2001.

Davies, Anne. *Making Classroom Assessment Work,* 3rd edition. Connections Publishing, 2011.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency, K–8.* Heinemann, 2006.

Keene, Ellin Oliver, and Susan Zimmerman. *Mosaic of Thought,* 2nd edition. Heinemann, 2007.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Active Young Readers, Grades 4–6, Assessment Resource: A Teaching Resource,* 2003.

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture. *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades Primary–3,* 1997.

Pinnell, Gay Su, and Irene C. Fountas. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning, Grades K–2.* Heinemann, 2007.

Routman, Regie. *Conversations.* Heinemann, 2000.

Routman, Regie. *Reading Essentials.* Heinemann, 2002.

Taberski, Sharon. *Comprehension from the Ground Up.* Heinemann, 2011.

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* Heinemann, 2000.

Vignette

I assess all the time, formally and informally. Finding time to do records of oral reading is a matter of establishing a predictable structure for independent reading time. Once my students understand the expectations for this time, I can do small-group work (guided reading, small-group shared) or conferring, all of which might include assessment. I keep track of who I have seen on a class list.

I did try to see certain students on scheduled days but found that, for me, it was not ideal. The students I needed to see were not always the ones I was scheduled to see. The class tracking list keeps me in touch with who I have seen and how often.

~ grade 2 teacher

It is a challenge to assess in a primary classroom, but it is possible. First of all, the teacher must be realistic about how much time they can set aside for assessment. Considering developmental reality of four- and five-year-olds, only a short period of time will work. For example, 8 to 10 minutes maximum is realistic. Otherwise, other children will interrupt the assessment.

After morning activities (calendar, weather, morning message, shared reading, etc.), I make several activities available to the students (e.g., math games, puzzles, Plasticine, beading). These are activities that the children can engage in 100 percent independently, adhering to established ground rules.

These are not centres. Choice is available at all times. When the students are independently engaged, I can work with individual students or small groups.

~ grade primary teacher

As a primary teacher I use a schedule to rotate students for individual assessments. I record students' names on a Meeting Chart, so they can also see when they will be working with me. One of the challenges is developing independence during assessment time for those students not being assessed. At the beginning of the year, as we are learning about classroom structures, we practice what to do when I am assessing students. The students learn very quickly how to work independently, as well as when it is OK to interrupt. I also use a traffic cone on my meeting table to indicate to students that an assessment is taking place. Once that routine is established, I find time to assess at various times during the day —during the independent practice of reading and writing workshop, during literacy centres and centre time, or at any time when students are working independently.

~ grade primary teacher

Purpose and Intent of the Active Young Readers Assessment Resource Package

Teachers assess every day and in many ways. This assessment resource package has been created to assist teachers as they assess regularly, and to use this information to provide effective daily instruction for their students. The intent of the resource is to provide a variety of unseen texts across a range of fiction and non-fiction genres. These texts (carefully chosen for each student) may serve as benchmark texts at particular points in the year or whenever a teacher needs to use unseen text to expand the assessment of a particular student or of the class. In combination with daily ongoing assessment in many forms, the result of these assessments will become a part of the student's reader profile. It should be noted that these books and passages are intended for assessment purposes only and should not be used for instruction.

Creating a Reader Profile

Teachers need a wide variety of assessments and assessment tools to create a profile of the readers in their care. Formal and informal anecdotal notes, checklists for specific purposes, regular conference notes, reading records, standardized measures, and data from board or provincial assessments are but a few of the components of a reader profile. Unless the evidence in the profile is deep, rich, varied, and current, it is not possible to form a complete picture of the student as a reader. It is from careful analysis of evidence that strong and effective instructional decisions are made.

Decisions may include

- instructional context: whole-class, small-group, or individual instruction
- instructional focus: fluency, comprehension strategy use, word-solving strategies
- type of text to engage the reader
- level of text to support the reader
- challenges specific to the reader
- additional supports for the reader (intervention, additional personnel to be involved)

Using the Assessment Resource Package

Assessment of student learning and achievement in reading requires teachers to consider three key areas:

- the reading process and stages of development
- assessment tools appropriate for gathering information about students' development as readers
- features, supports, and challenges of text

With understanding in each of these areas, teachers are able to plan effectively for instruction that supports students' development as readers.

The assessment resource package offers information pertaining to reading and stages of reading development. It provides support for understanding texts, discusses various assessment practices, and includes a variety of templates for assessment. Finally, it ties all of these elements together by offering suggestions and considerations for instruction.

The student books and passages, both fiction and non-fiction, are appropriate for readers in the emergent, early, and transitional stages of development. Together with reading assessment forms, teachers can use these texts to assess a student's reading for comprehension, phrasing and fluency, expression, strategy use, and accuracy. It is important that all of these aspects of oral reading be considered, as overreliance on accuracy alone can provide limited or incomplete information. (For more information on context, please see page 19.)

The reading assessment forms can offer support specific to the student books and passages as well as information to guide teachers in their selection of instructional contexts to meet students' specific needs and interests. In-depth descriptions of the text, book introductions, and a range of comprehension discussion prompts are provided.

Student Reading Passages Included in This Assessment Resource Package

The reading assessment resource package contains 56 books and passages, intended to be used as benchmark texts for assessment. The texts encompass levels A–P, with a fiction and a non-fiction choice at each level. Additional texts are included for levels identified as places where teachers often need to use a wider variety of text.

Also included are texts designed for older readers. These texts are designed to be respectful of this audience in content, language use, and illustrations.

- **Levels A to F** contain all small books, with one fiction and one non-fiction choice at each level. There are extra texts at levels C and D. Additional texts are also provided at levels C and D to accommodate the needs of older readers.
- **Levels G and H** offer transition from books to passages, and include one fiction book and one non-fiction book, plus one fiction passage and one non-fiction passage, with additional texts. At these levels there are also fiction and non-fiction texts designed for older readers.
- **Levels I and beyond** are all passages, with fiction and non-fiction at each level.
- Additional texts as well as texts for older readers are provided at **levels J and K**.

Using the Texts

Seen and Unseen Text

The texts provided for this resource package are intended as unseen text for assessment purposes only. Asking a student to read an unfamiliar text gives the teacher an opportunity to see how the student is independently integrating all the skills and strategies of a reader. This gives a more accurate assessment of what the student has under control as a reader. The texts can be used to compare a student's progress over time, without fear that the text has been heard before and the student has internalized some of the features. Unseen text is intended for assessment purposes, as compared to seen text that is often used in a teaching and assessment environment. Benchmark assessments, with unseen text, are used less frequently and with a specific purpose in mind. Among the purposes:

- to form instructional groupings at the beginning of the year
- for periodic check-ins
- to find out additional information on a particular student
- to place a new student

Seen text is often used in daily classroom practice, as a teacher sits with a student and listens to him or her read a text that has been previously introduced or used as a teaching tool. This is very appropriate in a teaching situation, but less so in a more formalized assessment situation. The use of seen text often involves more teacher support than does unseen text. The student has some familiarity with the text, and the teacher is observing to see how he or she is using specific information from conferences or learning experiences on that particular text.

Procedure

A detailed procedure for taking a reading record is found on page 48. The procedure includes engaging the students in a brief conversation before reading, helping them to become more active readers, and activating their thinking about the text. Book introductions and prompts are provided for each text in each reading assessment form. The procedure also includes an "after reading" conversation during which students are offered a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding of the text.

Introducing the Text

A brief introduction sets the stage for successful reading. The teacher might offer the student a choice between a fiction or a non-fiction piece at the same level or might offer two texts of the same type (e.g., fiction) at adjacent levels. The student should be given a moment to examine the texts before selecting the one they wish to read. The teacher then gives a brief text introduction that may include title, proper names, and a brief statement that might reference the blurb on the back of the book/passage. It is important that the introduction be followed closely to provide as objective an assessment as possible.

Administering the Oral Reading Record

The procedures for administering an oral reading record can be found in the Understanding Assessment and Evaluation section of this resource.

After the Reading

- Highlight what the student did well.
- Provide time for a conversation with the student to determine how well the student understood the text. Use the prompts supplied for each selection and record student responses.
- Teacher and student co-construct the goal for future work.

Part 2: Comprehension Conversation of each reading assessment form offers conversation prompts on several levels. In a comprehensive assessment, teachers need to know whether students can find information from within the text and whether they can use higher-order thinking skills to infer beyond the page itself. Whether these are called thick and thin questions, or literal and inferential, they are based on a hierarchy of questions or prompts.

Final Steps

Analyze the student's reading behaviours (taking into consideration all of the evidence collected) and determine whether the text is an independent, instructional, or difficult level for the student. Identify one or two areas that would be appropriate for future instruction.

Assessment Resource Package Texts

Stage	Level	Fiction	Non-fiction
EMERGENT	A	*I See It!*	*I See Spots*
	B	*I Like Berries!*	*Big and Small*
	C	*Out Walking*	*What Will I Wear?*
	C	*The Pet Store*	*The Animal Puzzle*
	C*	*My Day*	*Looking for Shapes*
EARLY	D	*It's Snowing!*	*Looking for Beach Glass*
	D	*Help!*	*Be Safe*
	D*	*A Fun Day at the Park*	*Looking After Planet Earth*
	E	*The Letters*	*How to Make a Handprint*
	F	*City Streets*	*Dandelion Days*
	G	*On Our Street*	*The Osprey*
	G	*The Very Clever Crow*	*Making Blueberry Muffins*
	G*	*Bob and the Road Monster*	*What Am I?*
	H	*Why the Sun Is in the Sky*	*A Nova Scotia Festival*
	H	*Mr. Black Comes Back*	*Is It a Dolphin? Is It a Porpoise?*
	H*	*Freddy and Banjo*	*Grow Your Own Tomatoes*
	I	*Telling Tales*	*Fossils at Blue Beach*
	J	*The First Fire*	*What a Sight!*
	J	*The Case of the Horrible Hiccups*	*The Arctic Fox*
	J*	*Monty's Checkup*	*Itch and Scratch*
	K	*Mac and Archie*	*Woof! The Story of a Working Dog*
	K	*My Cat, Morgan*	*Lucy's Questions about the Planets*
	K*	*The Seven Sisters*	*Crabbe Mountain: Then and Now*
TRANSITIONAL	L	*The Mischief-makers*	*Ladybugs*
	M	*The Cow in the Kitchen*	*Willie O'Ree*
	N	*Calla's Diary*	*The Bluenose*
	O	*Eliza Ballantyne's Journal*	*The Glooscap Trail*
	P	*Beans, Tomatoes, Lettuce, Carrots!*	*The Honourable Mayann E. Francis*

* indicates texts that might also be suitable for older readers

Understanding Reading

Fundamental Principles

Assessment of reading is done in an effort to support reading instruction. Students learn to read or view most easily when the following fundamental principles are in place.

Students learn to read/view when they

- are immersed in authentic reading experiences

- are encouraged to focus on the real reason for reading—making meaning

- develop a sense of ownership by having choices in what they read and view

- have opportunities to explore new learning with instructional level text

- receive regular, descriptive feedback about what they are doing well and also what they need to work on next

- receive explicit instruction about reading through the Gradual Release of Responsibility model

- share in the co-construction of personal reading goals and the development of learning plans

- share in the development of anchor charts to support their understanding and ongoing learning

- are encouraged to make approximations and take risks

- have opportunities to discuss their reading in a variety of contexts

- have opportunities to reflect on their growth as readers

> *Reading is a meaning making, problem solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced.*
>
> Clay, *Becoming Literate* (1991, p. 6)

Where Reading Fits in Balanced Literacy

A balanced literacy program is a framework in which all components of literacy instruction work together thoughtfully, strategically, and effectively. Balanced, or comprehensive, instruction provides a variety of instructional contexts (whole-class, small-group, and individual instruction) in reading and writing, makes oral language a centrepiece of instruction, and supports all readers through differentiation. An effective literacy program in reading is based in meaning, and gives students the tools to place comprehension at the centre of all learning. Balance does

not mean giving equal time to all elements or components. It means providing what students need as they need it. Ongoing assessment, understanding the characteristics within the stages of reading development, and an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice will determine how the teacher makes instructional choices for his or her students.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Balanced or comprehensive reading is rooted in Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility model (1983). Each component has a specific and important role, with the end goal being that of independence for the student. In this model, effective instruction involves

- teacher modelling, demonstration, explanation, and/or think aloud
- shared experiences where students assume some responsibility for the task with a relatively high level of support from the teacher
- guided experiences in which the student assumes more responsibility with less support from the teacher
- independence in which the student applies the new knowledge with very little, if any, active support from a teacher

When a child takes piano lessons, they learn from their teacher what the piece should sound like. It is only with supported practise from the teacher and lots of practise at home that they improve. If a child spends no time practising during the week, their skill level does not improve.

Modelled
"I do ... you watch"

Shared
"I do ... you help"

GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Independent
"You do ... I watch"

Guided
"You do ... I help"

Stages of Reading Development

Learning to read is a developmental process just like learning to speak or learning to walk. It is important to recognize that individual students will vary in the manner and the rate at which they progress through the developmental stages. There are, however, similarities in the ways students grow as readers. Because reading is developmental, it improves over time. With practice, students continually expand their repertoire of concepts, skills, and strategies, and the reading process becomes more and more sophisticated. It is a continuous and lifelong undertaking.

Stages of reading development identified in *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades Primary–3* and *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades 4–6* include the following:

Emergent

Readers at the emergent stage understand that print and visual text convey a *consistent* message or a story. These readers use pictures to predict the text and they role-play reading, relying on memory to reread familiar stories. Emergent readers are also beginning to recognize that text has directionality and are able to recognize some words in various contexts. They are beginning to predict unknown words using visual information and meaning. Emergent readers are also able to discuss what is happening in a text as well as what is likely to happen.

Early

Readers at the early stage of reading development are knowledgeable about most print conventions. They will use context and letter sound cues to make approximations, will take risks, and frequently are able to self-correct. Early readers will read familiar texts with confidence. They are able to make personal connections and are beginning to question and comment on text.

Transitional

Readers at the transitional stage of reading development are characterized by a growing sense of independence in selecting text, identifying purpose, and making meaning of print through a growing repertoire of strategies. Transitional readers read longer pieces of text that are not necessarily supported by illustrations and are able to make inferences from words and illustrations. These readers are able to respond personally and are developing the ability to respond critically and aesthetically.

Fluent

Readers at the fluent stage of reading development continue to do all of the above and, in addition, automatically integrate all sources of information, have developed an extensive vocabulary, are resourceful at constructing meaning when confronted with unfamiliar text, and will select and respond personally, critically, and aesthetically to a wide variety of textual materials.
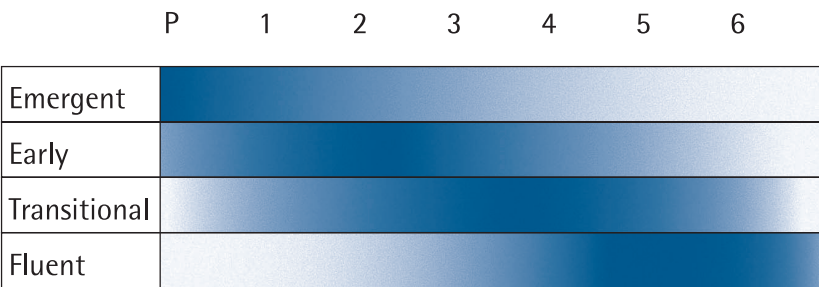
In grades primary–3, it is most common to have students who exhibit characteristics of the emergent, early, and transitional stages of reading development. It is highly unlikely, although not impossible, to find a student at the fluent stage of development in these grades.

Reading Development over Time

Emergent Readers Levels A–C	Early Readers Levels D–K	Transitional Readers Levels L–P	Fluent Readers Levels P–Z
• begin one-to-one matching • know that language can be recorded and revisited • know that text as well as illustration conveys the message • display reading-like behaviour • understand directionality of text • identify some familiar written words in a variety of contexts in a book, on a chart, or in the environment outside of school • can discuss what is happening in a story and predict what might happen next • make links to their own experience • occasionally predict words or phrases based on syntactical cues • occasionally predict based on initial and final consonants or familiar parts of words	• consistently match one-to-one • have knowledge of print conventions • are more confident in using background experience • make approximations and use context and letter-sound associations to sample, predict, and confirm • begin to self-correct • know the most common sounds and letters • have a basic sight word vocabulary of functional words • begin to read familiar texts confidently and can retell the message from printed and visual texts • select text appropriate to their needs and interests • use a variety of strategies to create meaning (e.g., make inferences, identify character traits, follow written directions) • use some features of written text to determine content, locate topics, and obtain information	• set purposes for their reading • read widely and experience a variety of children's literature • select appropriate material • adjust strategies for different texts and different purposes • use pictorial, typographical, and organizational features of written text to determine content, locate topics, and obtain information • integrate cues as they use reading strategies of sampling, predicting, and confirming or self-correcting • self-correct quickly, confidently, and independently • prefer to read silently • can retell and discuss their own interpretation of texts read or viewed • recognize characters can be stereotyped • make meaningful substitutions • have an increasing bank of sight words • use a range of word identification strategies for constructing meaning	• select with growing independence, texts appropriate to their interests and learning needs • read widely and experience a variety of children's literature, with emphasis on genre and authors • use pictures and illustrations, word structures, and text features to locate topics and obtain or verify understandings of information • use a range of strategies automatically when constructing meaning from text • describe their own processes and strategies for reading and viewing • give reasons for their opinions • use background knowledge to question information presented in print and visual text • seek information from a variety of texts

Reading Development over Time (continued)

Emergent Readers Levels A–C	Early Readers Levels D–K	Transitional Readers Levels L–P	Fluent Readers Levels P–Z
Texts: simple stories with one to two lines of print	**Texts:** longer books with high-frequency words and supportive illustrations	**Texts:** texts with many lines of print, organized into short chapters, more difficult picture books, wider range of genres	**Texts:** wide reading of a variety of long and short text, in a range of genres and for a range of purposes
Predominantly found in grades			
P–1	1–2	2–4	4–6

Students should also have many opportunities to read texts in a digital format. While many of the reading processes are similar, there are some differences. For more information on reading digital text, see page 73.

Sources of Information
(Cueing Systems)

Reading is a process of actively constructing meaning from text. It involves the constant interaction between the mind of the reader and the text.

The successful construction of meaning requires the integration of the four sources of information: content, meaning, structure, visual.

The comfortable and flexible application of the sources of information suggests a student uses these as necessary for the purpose of comprehension.

Sources of Information

Context
(Pragmatic)

Meaning (M)
(Semantic)

Does it make sense?

Structure (S)
(Syntactic)

Does it sound right?

Visual (V)
(Graphophonic)

Does it look right?
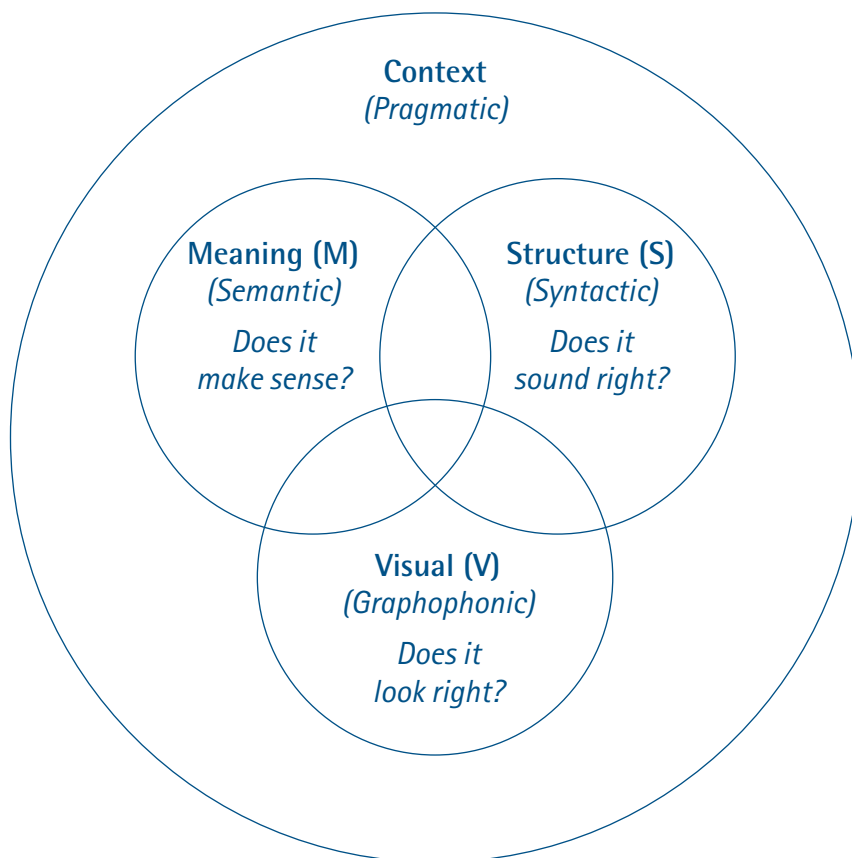
It is important to note that, in spite of its title, the visual source of information has nothing to do with the correspondence of illustrations and text. It refers exclusively to sound-letter connections. The role of illustrations and pictures falls under meaning or semantics. The use of the word "visual" refers to the student's ability to automatically match the look of letters and letter patterns to the decoding process.

Focus on Context (C) (Pragmatic System)

- refers to readers' understanding of how text structure works and the context for reading
- readers use this information to predict meaning as they read
- helps readers activate prior knowledge of text types to support them to make effective predictions
- answers the question, "what is the **reading situation**?" (context)

Focus on Meaning (M) (Semantic System)

- refers to the making-sense element of reading
- consists of the meaning conveyed through words, pictures, and ideas
- readers make sense of reading when they combine their prior knowledge with the information on the page
- readers gather information from the text, illustrations, and other features of the text with which they are interacting
- focus is on whether it makes sense

Focus on Structure (S) (Syntactic System)

- refers to the structure of language and how language works
- readers use information such as sentence structure, punctuation, word order, function words, and word endings to make sense of syntactic cues
- grammar in terms of standard English language plays a key role in this source of information
- focus is on whether it sounds right

Focus on Visual (V) (Graphophonic System)

- refers to knowledge about the sound-symbol system and how readers apply this knowledge as they read
- focus is on checking the visual information and asking whether it looks right
- phonological awareness is the foundation of a reader's success with the sound-symbol knowledge and its application to reading

It's All about Comprehension:
The Five Pillars

Comprehension is the overarching reason for reading. No matter how accurate or fluent a reader may be, without comprehension, and the deeper levels of understanding that strong comprehension instruction provides, reading is purposeless. While on their own accuracy and fluency are important, the real purpose for reading is to understand and, thus, to think. Comprehension is supported and enhanced by accuracy and fluency, background knowledge, oral language and vocabulary, the reading-writing connection, and a repertoire of strategies.

The goal and essence of reading is comprehension and is founded on broad pillars that are unified by the common thread of inferring, as represented in the diagram below.

> *Comprehension isn't a pillar at all—it's the overarching pediment, supported atop the pillars. Everything leads to the pinnacle—understanding what we read—and plays a part in children's comprehension development.*
>
> Taberski, *Comprehension from the Ground Up* (2011, p. 4)

COMPREHENSION
Experiences and skills that cultivate students' comprehension

| Background Knowledge | Repertoire of Strategies | Oral Language and Vocabulary | Accurate Fluent Reading | Reading-Writing Connections |

I N F E R R I N G

Inferring, or "reading between the lines," is represented as a wrap-around strategy because readers apply this strategy in many ways as they comprehend what they read. Because readers are frequently reading between the lines based on what they bring to the text, coupled with what the text offers, Sharon Taberski refers to inferring as the *super strategy* (2011). Some of the ways that readers infer involve

- making predictions (confirming or changing them as they proceed through a text)
- slowing down or speeding up the rate of reading based on the meaning drawn from the text
- questioning what is happening, why it is happening, etc.
- visualizing
- making connections between what they know already and what they are reading (what they know and have experienced, other texts, broader world issues)
- determining the author's intent

Background Knowledge and Experience

While we often use the terms **prior knowledge** and **background knowledge** interchangeably, there are differences.

Prior knowledge refers to the totality of our own personal, or lived, experience. Background knowledge has a more academic slant and relates to what we have learned about our world through educational experiences, secondary sources, and content area study. We cannot influence or change prior knowledge, but we can play a significant role in the development of background knowledge for our students.

Effectively integrating the sources of information while reading helps a student to make meaning at the word and sentence level. Meaning construction is also significantly affected by a student's knowledge and experiences. What a student brings to a text has a great impact on what he or she will take away from the reading.

Three sets of knowledge that influence meaning construction (M) are as follows:

- **personal knowledge and experience**—the sum total of all those experiences the reader has had
- **literacy knowledge and experience**—what the reader knows as a result of past reading or viewing experiences, including the way text is structured
- **world knowledge and experience**—what the reader knows about the world at large as a result of conversation, observation, interaction, and exposure to various media and people

When students read they are trying to fit what the author is telling them with what they already know. It is this process that allows them to make connections, ask questions, read between the lines, create pictures in their minds, and build new understandings.

A student who plays soccer every summer and has read about and watched soccer on television will be able to understand on a deeper level the ideas and images being shared by the author as he or she reads a piece about how to kick the ball. If the text is about abstract concepts or unfamiliar ideas, places, or people, the process of making meaning will be more challenging. The same student who understood the piece about soccer may not experience the same success if the text is about an unfamiliar game such as cricket. He or she may be able to read all of the words in the piece about cricket but still experience difficulty in understanding some of the terms and vocabulary, recognizing figurative language and its meaning, and developing an overall understanding of the piece. Because there is no prior knowledge, it is difficult to develop new ideas or to know when perceptions are flawed and should be questioned.

Teachers can help students draw on their personal knowledge and experience, recognizing the diversity of knowledge and experience that each student brings to a text. Teachers can design instruction that activates and broadens students' literary knowledge and experiences and enriches the world knowledge that a student brings to the text.

Students' *prior* knowledge and experience will never be identical. However, this range and diversity of knowledge and experiences add to the richness of discussions. In addition, shared experience (including class trips, outdoor experiences, and conversations) help create common experiences upon which students can build. Sharing of texts can offer unique insights and alternative perspectives as well as expanding students' background knowledge. By explicitly teaching background knowledge, teachers help students to apply efficient strategies to their reading experiences. As students make predictions, confirm, and/or self-correct, their understanding of the text is enhanced and their *background* knowledge increases.

A Repertoire of Strategies

Effective readers use a variety of strategies to construct meaning from text. These strategies include those that readers use to maintain the reading, or keep it going, and those for constructing deeper meaning.

Although resources often discuss these strategies in two separate categories, they are actually used simultaneously and should be used intuitively by readers. Not only should these reading strategies be integrated while reading, the integration of strategies is equally important for instruction. Comprehension strategies are often taught individually to give students opportunity to understand and internalize each strategy. *A key message, however, is that these strategies are used fluently and flexibly by effective readers, and that they rarely, if ever, operate independently from other strategies. Effective reading is the flexible combining of multiple strategies to find the meaning in a text.*

Comprehension strategies are the tools readers use to deepen their understanding and expand their thinking. While there are hundreds of strategy "tricks and tips," lists of those worth explicitly teaching usually include the following strategies good readers use. These strategies keep the reader going. They include the following:

- **Predicting:** Readers have expectations about the text before reading and during the reading, regarding content and style.
- **Confirming:** Readers are able to confirm earlier predictions.
- **Monitoring:** Readers can check on meaning and can identify when any one of the sources of information (meaning, structure, visual, content) is breaking down. They know if the text is too difficult.
- **Self-correcting:** Readers can use a number of "fix-up" strategies (reread, use context clues, read on, skip it and return, ask for help) when they encounter difficulty.

" Study after study has revealed that explicitly teaching students even one strategy for comprehending text can improve their comprehension. "

National Reading Panel (2000)

Comprehension is much more than applying strategies to a text. Effective readers use these strategies only if they need to do so. The strategies are not intended to be a checklist to be followed during each reading experience. The repertoire comes into place as a student considers a new text or tries to evaluate where meaning has broken down. Only then will a reader call upon a strategy to help in the specific instance. It is important, however, that readers have a toolkit of effective strategies upon which to draw, when necessary.

Check It Out

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency K–8.* **Heinemann, 2006, pp. 42–50.**

Harvey, Stephanie, and Anne Goudvis. *Strategies That Work.* **Stenhouse, 2000.**

Johnson, Pat, and Katie Keier. *Catching Readers Before They Fall.* **Stenhouse, 2010, pp. 132–174.**

Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Teaching in Action Grades Primary–3,* **2006, pp. 29–33.**

Pinnell, Gay Su, and Irene C. Fountas. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning Grades K–2.* **Heinemann, 2007.**

Taberski, Sharon. *It's All about Comprehension (DVD Suite Facilitator's Guide).* **Heinemann, 2009, pp. 101–113.**

Taberski, Sharon. *Comprehension from the Ground Up.* **Heinemann, 2011, pp. 249–288.**

- **Word solving:** Readers use a number of strategies to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words (strategies may include looking for words within a word, common rimes, analogy).
- **Sampling/gathering:** Readers are able to select pertinent information from the print or digital text to support reading and meaning making.
- **Maintaining fluency:** Readers are able to read the text smoothly and can adjust rate and expressions to suit the text and the degree of difficulty.

Strategies Essential for Deeper Comprehension

- **Making connections:** The reader is able to recognize relationships that exist between the text and other experiences. These connections support the reading by linking the reader's prior knowledge and experience to the reading situation. Connections include
  – text to self: connections between the text and the reader's own life
  – text to text: connections between the text and other texts that have been previously read or viewed or heard
  – text to world: connections between the text and larger world issues

- **Visualizing:** During reading, the reader is able to create images in his or her head pertaining to the text.

- **Inferring:** The reader is able to construct meaning from the text by reasoning about known facts or evidence that may be implied, but not directly stated by the author. Inferring is often referred to as the ability to "read between the lines."

- **Synthesizing:** The reader is able to combine information from a variety of sources (personal, world, literary knowledge) to construct new understandings about the topic or text.

- **Determining importance:** The reader is able to identify central ideas and select key points.

- **Analyzing:** The reader is able to examine the text, its construction, ideas, and content in order to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of what was written and how it was written.

- **Monitoring comprehension and using fix-up strategies when meaning breaks down:** Readers can use a number of fix-up strategies (reread, use context clues, read on, skip it, ask for help) when they encounter difficulty.

Oral Language

Oral language includes speaking and listening, phonological awareness, and vocabulary development.

Talk is critical to learning. Classroom environments rich in talk opportunities are places where learning happens. Through talk students explore and share their understandings. Oral language helps students to extend their understandings into reading and writing.

Accurate, Fluent Reading

Concepts about Books and Print

As a part of accuracy, young readers need to understand the surface features of text. Understanding these features is a precursor to accurate, fluent reading. These features and concepts include the following:

- the front and back of the book
- that print gives a message
- that print moves left to right
- that pictures are often related to the print
- the concept of letter
- the concept of word
- symbols and signs in their environment
- some high-frequency words in context
- how to follow words by pointing accurately
- most alphabet letters (fluently)

Accuracy and fluency are components of a complete reader profile. Accuracy refers to the word-by-word correctness exhibited by a student as he or she reads a passage. It is recorded, during a one-on-one session between student and teacher, by a series of codes. Any measure of accuracy must be accompanied by an analysis of student strengths and needs.

" Oral language is the foundation on which reading is built, and it continues to serve this role as children develop as readers.

Hiebert et al, *Every Child a Reader* (2009)

We might think even more specifically about differences between talking and speaking. Talk is less formal and more conversational, while speaking refers to more formalized, and sometimes public, debate and discussion. Both have their place in our classrooms and are found embedded in the speaking and listening outcomes.

" As students move between home and school, oral language becomes more than a tool for communication, it also becomes a tool for learning and acquiring print literacy.

Trehearne, *Nelson Language Arts Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book* (2004, p. 25)

Check It Out

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency K–8.* **Heinemann, 2006, pp. 75–76.**

Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Teaching in Action Grades Primary–3,* **2006, pp. 17–23.**

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture. *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades Primary–3,* **1997, pp. 150–157.**

Taberski, Sharon. *Comprehension from the Ground Up.* **Heinemann, 2011, pp. 90–118, 178–208.**

Taberski, Sharon. *It's All about Comprehension* **(DVD suite facilitator's guide). Heinemann, 2009, pp. 71–83.**

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Kindergarten Teacher's Resource Book.* **Thompson Nelson, 2000, pp. 115–155, 181–219.**

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book.* **Thompson Nelson, 2004, pp. 23–111.**

> *Expression (the technical term is **prosody**) includes pausing, phrasing, rhythm, pitch, smoothness, and stress, all working together in an integrated way to reflect the reader's interpretation of the text.*

Fountas and Pinnell, *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency, K–8* (2006, p. 71)

Understanding Oral Language

Phonological awareness is an overarching term that refers to the ability to attend to the sound structure of language. It includes awareness of words, syllables, rhymes, and sounds.

Phonemic awareness is one aspect of phonological awareness and refers to the sound level only (the ability to blend, segment, delete, and substitute individual sounds in words along with rime, isolating, and manipulating words.)

Phonics is the representation of the sounds of language in written form.

Accuracy scores are used to determine whether text is at an appropriate level for a student. Appropriate level depends on purpose.

Just Right Text for Just Right Purposes
- just right text for independent reading: 95 percent accuracy and above
- just right text for instructional purposes: 90–94 percent
- challenging text: below 90 percent

Fluency refers to the degree of expression and phrasing and the prosody with which a student reads a text. When a reader reads with fluency, he or she emphasizes key phrases, reads in meaningful chunks, reads at a smooth rate, and uses varied intonation. When students work specifically on fluency, they use very easy text (98–99 percent word accuracy) so that they do not need to apply their cognitive energy to accuracy or comprehension.

(See also Understanding Assessment and Evaluation, page 27.)

Reading/Writing Connection

Reading and writing are closely linked in many ways. Before we can expect students to write in a specific genre or form they must have had frequent opportunities to read and be read to in that form. Read-aloud and shared reading experiences across a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction genres are an integral part of the foundation for successful writing experiences, including vocabulary building. Students learn to "read like a writer," to look for text features and characteristics that make text accessible. They also learn to "write like a reader," to understand the role of audience and purpose.

This connection is reinforced through a large, varied, and well-organized classroom library comprising a range of fiction and non-fiction text.

Teachers also reinforce the connection between reading and writing through the use of mentor texts. Mentor texts are texts that serve as models of excellent writing. The reading and rereading of these texts introduce students to the craft of fine writing. This writing then serves as inspiration for their own writing.

Vignette

Using Mentor Texts

In my role as a mentor, I was invited to a school to do a demonstration lesson with a grades 2/3 combined class. The teacher expressed a concern about getting students to write. The students would write very little if anything at all.

I planned a lesson using *The Important Book* by Margaret Wise Brown. I read the book aloud and then had students think about what was important to Brown in the book. In this book the author had discussed the importance of simple objects such as a spoon, grass, or rain. I then asked the students what was important to them. Since this school was in an area where fishing, four-wheelers, and a variety of other vehicles are important, I made sure our discussion led to these types of objects. I also asked the students what they like to do and asked them what objects were important to those activities. Many spoke of playing hockey or hunting, and several of the girls mentioned figure skating. They were very willing to offer the information. When I asked them to write, I encouraged them to write about objects that were important to them.

When the students began to write, I could not identify the students the teacher had referred to as those boys who she couldn't get to write. The individual pieces of writing were placed in a class book, which was later placed in the library for others to read.

> ~teacher mentor, primary–3

> " *We can read poignant picture books and beautiful non-fiction as mentor texts and uncover the bones of beautiful writing so our children can then recreate this craft in their writing.* "
>
> Taberski, *Comprehension from the Ground Up* (2011, p. 209)

Through a focus on the reading/writing connection, teachers can demonstrate

- explicit, deliberate focus on high-frequency words in a wide variety of contexts and across curriculum lines
- text features used to concisely convey information
- the use of words in different contexts (to give instructions, to persuade, etc.)
- how texts are intentionally organized to enhance the conveyance of information for a specific purpose to a given audience
- the use of signal words or phrases that guide the reader (e.g. , transition words such as first, next, in the meantime, later that day)
- the use of punctuation as a courtesy to the reader to support comprehension
- ways in which reading and writing are alike

Understanding Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are essential components of teaching and learning.

Assessment is the process of gathering information on student learning.

Evaluation is the process of analyzing, reflecting upon, and summarizing assessment information, and making judgments and/or decisions based on the information collected.

Reporting involves communicating the summary and interpretation of information about student learning to the various audiences who require it.

Principles of Assessment and Evaluation

- The primary purpose of assessment and evaluation is to inform teaching and to promote and encourage learning.
- Assessment and evaluation must be an ongoing and integral part of the teaching/learning process. It is one continuous cycle consisting of collecting evidence, interpreting evidence, providing feedback to students, and making instructional decisions.
- Assessment and evaluation must be consistent with beliefs about curriculum and classroom practices supporting twenty-first-century learners.
- Assessment and evaluation processes involve the use of multiple sources of information collected in a variety of contexts. To make decisions about any aspects of a student's learning, the teacher gathers evidence of that learning at different times, in different contexts, and in different ways.
- Assessment and evaluation processes recognize learners as active partners in their own learning. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own growth, considering progress, strengths and needs, and goals.

Large-Scale Assessment

	Purpose	Method
Large-Scale Assessment Individual student and program assessments, externally managed in accordance with rigorous ethical guidelines	• to provide information about the performance of individual students to students, parents, and teachers • to provide information about the delivery of curricula • to identify system-wide trends and patterns • to help the system be accountable to all stakeholders	• collects a relatively narrow amount of highly valid and reliable information from a large number of students • administered by classroom teachers

Classroom-Based Assessment: Assessment for and of Learning

	What is it?	What does it look like? (What does it tell us?)	What is the information used for? (What do we need to do to implement it?)
Assessment *for* learning	• goes beyond formative assessment in that it includes the deep involvement of students • happens in classroom context	• helps to decide what to do next • involves specific descriptive feedback in relation to criteria • focuses on improvement • involves the student	• next teaching and learning steps
Assessment *of* learning	• summative assessment or evaluation	• checks what has been learned to date • evaluative feedback including marks, grades, and scores • compares the student's learning to the expectations	• to communicate progress toward achievement of curriculum outcomes • report cards • system data • seeking trends

Feedback

Anne Davies, in her book *Making Classroom Assessment Work,* 3rd edition, describes two types of feedback—descriptive and evaluative.

Descriptive feedback tells students about their learning—what is going well and what needs more attention. Descriptive feedback

- occurs during, as well as after, the learning
- is easily understood and relates directly to the learning
- is specific, so performance can improve
- involves choice on the part of the learner as to the type of feedback and how to receive it
- is part of an ongoing conversation about the learning
- is in comparison to models, exemplars, samples, or descriptions
- is about the performance or the work—not the person

Descriptive feedback often begins with a positive phrase such as, "Here is an example of where you … " or "I noticed that you … " naming a specific action or product from the student. This feedback should be as immediate as possible.

Evaluative feedback uses letters, numbers, check marks, and other symbols to provide a summative picture of student progress. While it provides information about student progress to date, it may not inform next steps learning.

Researchers recommend that the amount of evaluative feedback be reduced and the amount of descriptive feedback be significantly increased.

Vignette

Descriptive Feedback

In my grade 2 classroom I confer frequently with my students. At the beginning of a recent conference with Emma, I noted that she stopped regularly when she came to a period. While this was not my conference focus, I still said to her, "Emma, I noticed that you are stopping at the periods. That makes your reading sound very good. That's what growing readers do." "Thanks," she said. "I've been thinking about that a lot."

I have found that being very explicit with what I notice has given new enthusiasm and confidence to my students. They are now aware that I am really listening to what they say and that I care about what they are doing, in the most specific of terms.

~ grade 2 teacher

Gathering Data

Interpreting Data

Using Data/ Information
a) to inform instruction
b) to report
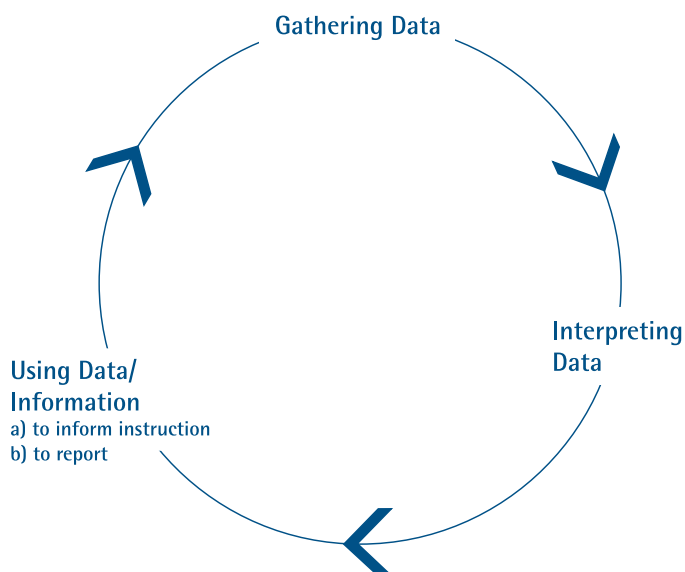
Tools to Assess Reading Development

Assessment Tools	What Is Being Assessed?	How to Assess	Sample Sources
1. Observation	• attitude • strategy use • work ethic • interest and engagement • reading behaviours	• anecdotal records • checklists • rubrics • video clip/stills • planned • unplanned	• Brailsford and Stead, *Grade One Reading Guide*, p. 117 • Brailsford and Stead, *Grade Three Reading Guide*, pp. 13–18, 190–199 • Collins, *Growing Readers*, pp. 3–4 • Collins, *Reading for Real*, pp. 88–90 • Miller, *Teaching with Intention*, pp. 99, 102 • Routman, *Reading Essentials*, p. 100 • Stead, *Reality Checks*, p. 174
2. Conferences/ Conversations	• comprehension • accuracy • fluency • strategy use • attitudes • interests	• retelling (assisted, unassisted) • response • oral reading records • questioning (multi-level) • anecdotal records • checklists	• Allen, *Conferring* • Collins, *Growing Readers*, pp. 16, 29–33, 124–125, 167, 178 • Miller, *Reading with Meaning*, pp. 7, 11, 33–36, 46 • Routman, *Reading Essentials*, pp. 101–105 • Trehearne, *Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book*, pp. 529–532

Assessment Tools	What Is Being Assessed?	How to Assess	Sample Sources
3. Work Samples/Product (as appropriate developmentally)	• range and amount of reading • strategy use • skill development • growth/improvement • comprehension • reading responses (visual, written, oral, dramatic)	• reading logs • retelling • response • learning logs/journals • graphic organizers • visual representation • portfolios • rubrics • co-created rubrics • navigation of multimedia formats • audio and/or visual recordings	• Brailsford and Stead, *Kindergarten Reading Guide*, p. 102 • Brailsford and Stead, *Grade One Reading Guide*, pp. 188–195 • Collins, *Growing Readers*, pp. 157 • Stead, *Reality Checks*, pp. 33–51 • Taberski, *On Solid Ground*, pp. 64–69, 71–72, 163, 171
4. Self-assessment and Peer Assessment	• group work • discussion • reading strategies • attitude • interests • reflection about growth over time	• checklists • rubrics • surveys and inventories • open-ended questions • anecdotal comments	
5. Oral Reading Records	• comprehension • accuracy • fluency • strategy use • reading behaviours	• rubric (fluency) • coding of reading behaviours • anecdotal records • retelling • response	• Brailsford and Stead, *Grade 3 Reading Guide*, pp. 113–116 • Taberski, *On Solid Ground*, pp. 45–63 • Trehearne, *Grades 1–2 Teachers' Resource Book*, pp. 149–151

These are the forms of language arts assessment that I use in my primary classroom.

- Letter identification—in September and ongoing as needed
- Concepts about print—in September and as needed
- I look at students' writing samples for stage of writing and stage of spelling—first sample on primary orientation and/or the first day of school and then ongoing
- Anecdotal notes during guided reading—always ongoing
- Running records—always ongoing
- Anecdotal notes during interactive and/or shared writing—as often as possible
- Rubrics—to assess during short oral presentations
- Checklists—used in May or so to check for students' ability to read
- High-frequency words out of context (checking for automatic recognition) and also ability to write them quickly (just on a dry erase board)—again checking for how automatic the response is or are students continuing to rely on the word wall, finding words in familiar books, environmental print, etc.

~ grade primary teacher

In the primary–3 English language arts classroom, observation is the most important assessment tool teachers use. To use observation effectively, teachers need to know a lot about students, language, and how students learn language, and they need to be able to interpret what they are observing.

1. Observation

Observation is one of the most powerful assessment tools available to teachers. Systematic observation is the careful consideration and analysis of students' behaviours and performances based on a broad range of contexts. Through observation, teachers can consider what students think, know, and can do as they engage in classroom activities that require them to demonstrate their use of language. Observation can provide information about students'

- thinking processes
- work habits
- participation in class or group experiences
- attitudes toward reading and learning
- interests
- use of time
- use of a variety of print or digital texts
- social skills
- oral language

There are two kinds of observation:

- **ongoing (informal),** where a teacher notes something that was said or done by a student relevant to their development of skills and knowledge
- **pre-planned (formal),** where the teacher plans the time to observe, who will be observed, and the focus of the observation

A variety of record-keeping systems may be used for organizing observations, including anecdotal records or checklists. It is also helpful to supplement written observations with audiotapes or videotapes of students engaged in reading experiences.

Simply gathering and organizing observation notes is not enough. It is only in the careful and deliberate analysis of these observations, in combination with other assessments, that effective instruction comes.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records are short narrative descriptions of observations made while students are engaged in authentic learning experiences. Reading workshops, collaborative group work, independent activities, and conferences are all occasions when anecdotal notes may be recorded. Teachers have many different ways of organizing the information they observe. Some strategies include

- keeping a binder with one page per student
- recording notes on sticky notes that are placed in a binder at the end of the day
- recording observations on index cards that are organized into sections for each student
- using templates for recording and organizing observations
- using a clipboard for recording observations that day, transferring and organizing observation notes at the end of the day
- using a separate sheet for each student
- using templates that are divided into spaces for each student in the class (see sample on page 34)
- spreadsheets
- using personal digital assistants (PDAs), videotapes, audio recordings
- using electronic means, such as PowerTeacher Gradebook

Sample Anecdotal Record

Instructional Focus: Respond personally to text in a variety ways **Date:** Oct 20, 20XX

Independent Activity: draw a picture or use plasticine to create a favourite part from Read Aloud

Student A easily generated a drawing. used many details to represent his favourite part. Clearly described why he selected that part	**Student B** made a random picture, not connected to book but could easily talk about favourite part ✻	**Student C** used plasticine to represent favourite part many details and supports with explanation matching design	**Student D**
Student E	**Student F** used plasticine to recreate favourite part. Some details represented with some random creations	**Student G**	**Student H** easily distracted w/ scaffolding she can draw a picture to represent her favourite part ✻
Student I recreated favourite part using plasticine independently articulates reason for choosing the part Use background knowledge	**Student J** - required support to think about story. Reread story to help talk about favourite part. ✻	**Student K** uses a picture with some details connected to favourite part. Explanation is not organized	**Student L**
Student M	**Student N** - using plasticine to construct favourite part - talks about his reasons easily connecting to personal experience	**Student O** Easily talks about fav. part - slow to represent using a picture ✻	**Student P** used Plasticine to recreate 2 fav. parts. Very independently explains reason for selecting 2 parts.
Student Q - used a picture to represent favourite part but required prompting to talk about selection ✻	**Student R** absent	**Student S**	**Student T**

✻ indicates further support/attention

While it is important that teachers take the time necessary to gather relevant information and record anecdotal notes, it is essential that teachers also reflect on these notes. Through reflection, a teacher is able to analyze anecdotal records, make inferences, and identify what the student has under control in an effort to recognize and identify patterns and trends in reading behaviour. **It is through this analysis that effective instructional planning takes place.**

Checklists

Checklists are useful as an organizational device to focus observations and to clarify thinking about what behaviours are indicative of successful learning. Checklists also help to ensure consistency from one observation to the next. When students are involved in the development and use of checklists, they learn what is valued in a particular learning context and take ownership of their learning. Checklists are most effective when they assess specific curriculum outcomes pertaining to a topic (e.g., letters and sounds of the alphabet).

Checklists may be used to record information about
- specific reading skills/strategies
- a student's reading and viewing interests
- individual or group work habits
- a student's progress on a developmental continuum
- indicators of the student's stage of reading development

In addition to providing information about student learning, checklists can also provide useful information about the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional program and areas for future focus.

For examples of checklists, see
- *Kindergarten Reading Guide* (Brailsford and Stead 2006)
- *Grade One Reading Guide* (Brailsford and Stead 2006)
- *Grade Two Reading Guide* (Brailsford and Stead 2007)
- *Grade Three Reading Guide* (Brailsford and Stead 2007)
- *Teaching in Action Grades Primary–3* (Nova Scotia Department of Education 2006, pp. 77, 79, 82–83)
- *Kindergarten Teacher's Resource Book* (Trehearne, Miriam 2000, pp. 79–83, 100–101)
- *Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book* (Trehearne, Miriam 2004, pp. 116–118, 270–273, 660)

Rubrics

Rubrics are useful tools for both students and teachers. A rubric is a carefully designed scale that identifies the essential criteria to be assessed and evaluated and provides a gradient of descriptors for each criterion. Rubrics must demonstrate links to the grade-level specific curriculum outcomes (SCOs). Rubrics are helpful in identifying expectations or standards prior to the learning situation and are also helpful for evaluation purposes.

Some rubrics are teacher created, but at other times it is very beneficial for students to share in the experience of creating the criteria in the rubric. When students are involved in the development and use of rubrics they learn what is valued in a particular learning context and take ownership of their learning.

2. Conferences/Conversations

One-to-one conferences allow teachers to gain some of the most valuable information about their students as readers. During this time, students have the opportunity to talk with their teachers about their reading, the strategies they use, and the success they are experiencing, as well as the difficulties they encounter. Conferences can also focus on student interests and attitudes toward reading, and can be used to identify goals or actions for future instruction.

Teaching Tip

Before beginning the process of conferring with your students, decide how you are going to keep track of what happens during the conference, including the goals set by you and the student together. Whether you choose to record these things separately, in the student's notebook, in a binder, or on your computer, planning ahead to track the information is a must.

A conference should feel like a conversation or discussion between teacher and student. **The conference goal is for the student to do most of the talking.** Discussion during a conference may involve talk about some of the following:

- goal setting for future reading
- what the teacher has noticed about the student's reading
- appropriateness of book choice
- kinds of texts read
- personal reaction to impressions of texts
- feelings toward reading in general
- reading strategies used
- problems or areas of difficulty
- areas of success
- future book choices
- connections to self, other texts, and the world at large
- questions that emerge from the text
- observations about text features and text organization
- observations about the author's purpose for writing, style of writing, and use of language
- audience
- level of understanding with regard to the content and information presented in the text
- awareness of fictional elements such as character, setting, plot, and point of view

Prompts or questions are intended to create opportunities for the student to talk about their own learning and understandings rather than to simply respond to teacher queries. Prompts that are open-ended and that encourage thought provide the student with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to

- organize and interpret information
- make connections
- make inferences
- clarify and express their own thinking
- understand concepts
- make generalizations
- make and modify predictions
- demonstrate creativity and originality
- question, ponder, and wonder

> *I believe that conferring is one of most significant actions we take as teachers: it serves to individualize our instruction, move children from guided to independent practice, and provide daily opportunities to know—really know—our students.*
>
> Miller, Foreword to Allen, *Conferring* (2009)

Effective management is essential to have regular conferences with students. Some things to consider when planning conferences are as follows:

- With whom will you confer? Individuals or small groups?

- How often will you confer with each?

- What will be the focus for each conference? What do you want to find out?

- What will the other students be doing when you are conferring?

- What routines and expectations need to be in place to give you time to confer with students?

- What anchor charts should you and the student co-create to support routines and expectations?

- How will you arrange the room to allow for discussion that is focused but not disruptive to others?

- How will you record your observations and the evidence collected?

- How will you use the evidence in your instruction?

General Guidelines for Conferences

Types of Conferences
- The Check-in—a quick "touching base"

- Student initiated—to answer a particular question or celebrate a new learning

- Teacher initiated—a regular part of the assessment portion of reading workshop

Frequency
It is important that teachers meet with students, listen to them read, and discuss their reading on a regular basis. While teachers may not meet with all students an equal number of times, it is important that there is an opportunity to meet with each student. There will be students for whom it is necessary to meet more often, depending on the level of support required.

Duration
Just as the frequency of a conference varies from student to student, the length or duration of the conference will also vary. The duration is defined by the purpose. With some students it may be necessary to meet to accurately assess where they are as readers, the appropriateness of their book selections, or the degree of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension exhibited in their reading. For other students, the time required may be longer, depending on the depth and focus of the conference. The experts differ on the duration of a conference. While

Kathy Collins aims for conferences of three to five minutes, Debbie Miller spends longer chunks of time with her students. Sharon Taberski uses her independent reading time to alternate between conferring and small-group instruction. Regie Routman notes that a conference can take from 5 to 20 minutes.

Procedure

Some teachers prefer to go to each student's seat for a conference while others call the individual student or a small group of students to a more central meeting place. These decisions depend on the nature of the conference. A teacher may visit a number of students for quick informal check-ins at their seats, and invite a student who has requested a conference to come to a meeting area.

Focus

The focus of a conference will also vary from student to student. Ultimately, teachers need to understand and be able to support students with

- their reading and processing of text
- fluency
- comprehension
- selection of text for independent reading
- strategy use
- attitudes and interests
- response to text

While it would be difficult to address each of these areas in a single conference, it is possible to gain insight over time and through a variety of assessments.

Regie Routman suggests the following as a framework:

- Bring me a book that you can read pretty well.
- Why did you choose this book?
- What is the reading level of this book for you? (Just right, etc.)
- Tell me what the book is about so far.
- Read this part of the book for me.
- Tell me what you remember about what you just read.
- Let's discuss your strengths and what you need to work on.
- How long do you think it will take you to finish this book?

(Routman 2002, pp. 104–105)

Check It Out

Allen, Patrick. *Conferring.* Stenhouse, 2009.

Collins, Kathy. *Growing Readers.* Stenhouse, 2004, pp. 16, 29–33, 167.

Miller, Debbie. *Teaching with Intention.* Stenhouse, 2008, pp. 98–101, 111–124.

Routman, Regie. *Reading Essentials.* Heinemann, 2002, pp. 101–110.

Stead, Tony. *Good Choice!* Stenhouse, 2009, pp. 214, 216.

Taberski, Sharon. *It's All about Comprehension.* Heinemann, 2009, pp. 43, 60, 74, 89, 105.

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* Heinemann, 2000, pp. 36–42, 125–132.

3. Work Samples/Product

Reading Logs

Having students keep a record of all the books, articles, websites, etc., they read can provide a great deal of insight into their experiences as readers. For early, transitional, and fluent readers, a log can show

- what the student is reading
- how much the student is reading
- the range of genres
- favourite topics or authors
- the level of difficulty as perceived by the student

An emergent reader might also have a reading log, but the teacher helps the student to track their reading.

> **Caution**
> If completing the log takes longer than it took to read the book, the log is not appropriate as an independent task.
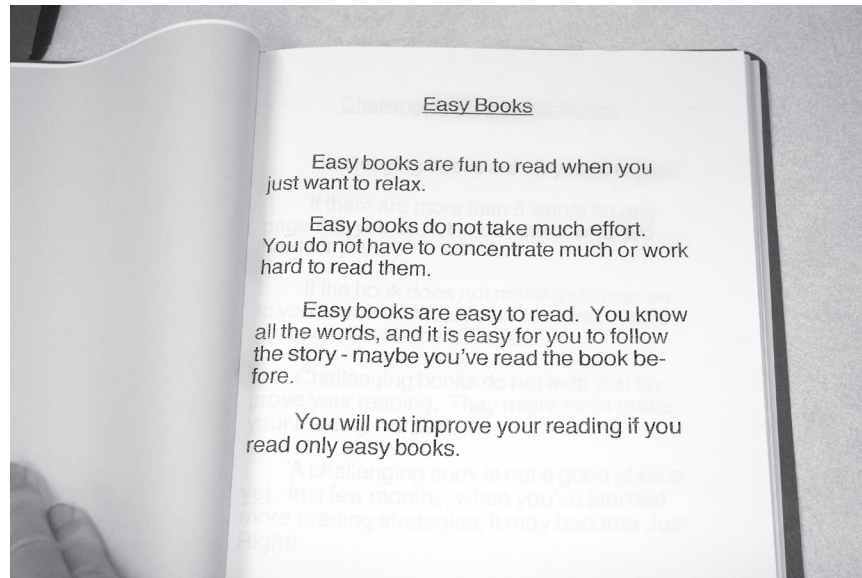
Once the student has tracked his or her reading over a period of time, a reading log can be used by the student as a tool for self-assessment. It can also be used to encourage reflection. Students may choose to include their reading logs in their portfolios or teachers may request that the log be brought to a conference.

The reading log template can be as simple as a place for the name of the book and the date. For samples of reading logs see

- *Reading Essentials* (Routman 2002, pp. A10–A11)
- *Good Choice!* (Stead 2009, pp. 13–14, 197, 199)
- *It's All about Comprehension* (Taberski 2009, pp. 136–140)
- *On Solid Ground* (Taberski, 2000, p. 184)

Retelling

Retelling is one way to assess a student's comprehension of a piece of text. Retelling is generally considered a recount of key ideas or events in a sequential order. Retelling should go beyond a literal event list. It provides insight into the level of understanding and the degree to which a student interacts with the text. A retelling, however, can be limiting. By considering broad questions the teacher can have a better sense of what the student actually comprehends:

- What information did the student come away with from the text?
- What information did the student consider to be most important?
- Did the student have a good understanding of the sequence of key concepts/main event?
- What aspects of the text did the student overlook or not understand?

Sharon Taberski suggests how retelling can be combined with other assessment tools. Sharon might begin with

> a running record of a child who's on the borderline between early and transitional reading. If the running record shows he can read the text with the desired accuracy, then I might go to a retelling to see how well he understood it . . . Or, just as likely, I'll start by talking with the child about his reading, and then move into a running record or retelling. (Taberski 2000, p. 76)

A retelling can be unassisted, where the student tells everything that he or she knows without prompting. If a teacher suspects that the student knows more than he or she is sharing, or if the student is at a very initial stage in his or her reading development, then the teacher may choose to ask some probing questions.

Vignette

Retelling

As I completed a reading record with a student I asked her to tell me about what she had read. The student looked at me with a puzzled frown and said "Why do I need to do that? Weren't you listening to me read?"

This reminded me of how unnatural a retell may be and how I need to use it both judiciously and as a springboard to get to deeper understanding. For some students a retell may be a great place to start. Others are ready to demonstrate their understanding in other ways. A more authentic prompt for these students might be "Let's talk about the book." This prompt leads to summarizing that is a more "real life" experience than a strict retell.

~ grade 1 teacher

Check It Out

Collins, Kathy. *Growing Readers*. Stenhouse, 2004, pp. 157–162.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency, K–8*. Heinemann, 2006, pp. 95–96, 474.

Stead, Tony. *Reality Checks*. Stenhouse, 2006, pp. 33–51.

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground*. Heinemann, 2000, pp. 64–77.

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book*. Thompson Nelson, 2004, pp. 523–524, 527, 529–533.

To better understand the degree of meaning making experienced by the students, teachers need to encourage students to go beyond a literal retelling of a text to respond personally and critically. Students are only able to do this personal and critical thinking if it has been modelled and practised in an instructional context. Read-alouds, think-alouds, and shared experiences provide rich opportunities for this modelling, and partner talk helps students internalize the types of thinking needed.

There are also differences in retelling between fiction and non-fiction. Kathy Collins highlights the characteristics of good fiction retelling:

- uses characters' names (characters)
- tells where the story is taking place (setting)
- includes the important parts of the story (plot)
- is told in an interesting voice (fluency)
- is checked with book to see if anything was missed (text evidence)
- is checked with book to see if teller understood everything (comprehension) (Collins 2004, p. 157)

For more fact-based retellings, Tony Stead reminds us of the value of note taking. "I believe that if we begin encouraging children to stop, think and record their thinking at an early age, we set them up for far more success in later years." (Stead 2006, p. 48)

Response to Text

"Although children need to know how to respond to their independent reading, it shouldn't dominate the reading workshop." (Stead 2009, p. 150)

Personal and critical response make up two of the four general curriculum outcomes for reading and viewing in *Atlantic Canada English Language Arts Curriculum: English Language Arts, Grades Primary–3*. Students require multiple opportunities and ongoing support to develop an understanding of response. It is also important that students and teachers recognize the many options for response. These include, but are not limited to,

- visual representation
- dramatic response
- oral discussion
- written response
- charts (prediction, question, connection)
- graphic organizers

Through the act of responding, students are able to demonstrate the level of engagement and thinking they experience before, during, and after reading.

A personal response goes beyond a simple retelling of the text (see page 41) to include

- personal, world, or text connections
- opinions
- questions
- observations
- inferences
- examples from text to support an opinion, a connection inference, etc.

In their responses, students may discuss

- the construction of the text
- the author's intent and effectiveness
- questions and understandings
- instances of fairness
- point of view, including their own, and those expressed and not expressed in the text

It is essential that teachers establish clear guidelines and expectations for student response. Debbie Miller, in *Reading with Meaning* (2002, pp. 99–100), reminds us of the importance of responding in real ways and keeping the focus on "what they're reading and thinking." She suggests the following tools as efficient options that help students respond and record their thinking but minimize the time taken away from reading.

- sticky notes
- notebook entries
- two-column notes
- Venn diagrams
- webs
- story maps

Through demonstration and modelling, shared reading and shared writing, drawings, peer conversations, and many opportunities for conversation, teachers can provide direction to students in the area of response.

> " *Too often, students spend hours writing about their reading. While written response is important and can deepen a reader's understanding, students need to spend most of their time reading.* "
>
> Routman, *Reading Essentials* (2002, p. 162)

Check It Out

Miller, Debbie. *Reading with Meaning.* **Stenhouse, 2002, pp. 7, 18, 94–103.**

Stead, Tony. *Good Choice!* **Stenhouse, 2009, pp. 147–194.**

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* **Heinemann, 2000, pp. 163–171.**

Taberski, Sharon. *Comprehension from the Ground Up.* **Heinemann, 2011, pp. 60–64.**

Assessing Response

After examining a student's response, the teacher may find it helpful to consider the following questions:

- What do you notice about this student's response?
- What are your observations of this student's development as a thinker and reader? A writer?
- What do you consider to be the strengths of this response?
- What aspect of the response could be improved?
- How might the student extend his or her response?
- How can you provide support for this student?
- How might you challenge this student?

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are tools that support learners in their understanding of the structure or context of text. They are not simply an activity. Graphic organizers offer students a way to organize their thinking and communicate their understanding of text in a visual way. These tools can

- assist students in activating prior knowledge before reading
- support students in acquiring the necessary information during the reading process
- encourage students to apply what they have learned after reading the text

> With younger readers a graphic organizer is most often used as an instructional aid by the teacher to demonstrate and support a particular strategy. Developing readers cannot be expected to use a graphic organizer independently in an assessment context.

There are many kinds of graphic organizers. The appendices provide templates of graphic organizers that may be used by students. It is important to note that certain graphic organizers may be more useful than others, depending on the text that is being read, and the stage of development of the student. Identifying the author's purpose and understanding text patterns and how the text is structured will help the reader to select the graphic organizer that will be the most useful. Students cannot be expected to use a graphic organizer independently before the organizer has been used as a model in shared experience and the students have had ample practice opportunities.

Caution: It is not expected or encouraged that a graphic organizer will be used with each text that is read by a student.

There are many other types of graphic organizers available as instructional tools. Teachers may use a graphic organizer as another assessment tool for readers who are in the transitional or later part of the early stage of reading development.

Concept Web (Appendix A1)

A concept web can be used to show the main idea and supporting details about a book, character, ideas, etc. In the centre circle, students should write the main idea. In the surrounding circles, students can record supporting details.

Idea/Details Chart (Appendix A2)

This chart supports students as they attempt to identify supporting details for significant or important ideas. First, students record the main idea in the large box. In the smaller boxes to the right, students record supporting details.

K-W-L (Appendix A3)

This chart supports students as they think about What They Know (K), What They Want to Know (W), and What They have Learned (L). In his book *Reality Checks* (2006, pp. 16–18)*, Tony Stead modifies this procedure to help younger readers who often have less than accurate background knowledge. The categories, within the Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) Strategy, become What I Think I Know, Confirmed, Misconceptions, New Information, and Wonderings.

Venn Diagram (Appendix A4)

A Venn diagram allows students to compare two people, objects, ideas, and so on, by showing the characteristics they have in common and those that are unique. Students label each circle with one person, object, or idea. In the overlapping part in the centre, students write all of the things that are common to both. In the outer portion of one circle, they record the ideas that are exclusive to that topic.

What I Read / What I Think (Appendix A5)

This chart is designed to support students in reading between the lines, making inferences, and supporting conclusions with evidence from the text. In the "What I Read" column, students record the information that is provided by the author. In the "What I Think" section, students record their inferences or understandings based on the information given.

4. Self–Assessment and Peer Assessment

Self- and peer assessment can be powerful tools. Allowing students to take responsibility for their learning and to be accountable for monitoring their growth is a significant part of the learning process.

Vignette

Student Responsibility

As I confer individually with students, I always tell them something I have appreciated or really liked about their reading or writing and then make one suggestion for improvement. I write the suggestion in their log or notebook. The next time we meet I ask them to refer to the suggestion and to talk about how they did in practising it.

~ grade 2 teacher

Vignette

Learning through Reflection

I have to make myself do reflection time at the end of a reading or writing workshop. I often hate to interrupt the flow and yet, once we assemble and begin our conversations, I learn so much. I often ask students to share what they are working on, to read a bit, or to talk about how they solved a problem.

I also need to model all these things for myself. I talk about my reading and writing and think out loud as I read and write. This helps the kids see that reading and writing are messy and not perfect. It also gives them some common language to discuss reading and writing.

~ grade primary/1 teacher

In short, self-assessment is the process of involving the student in the assessment process. When students understand themselves as learners and have clear goals and expectations, they are more engaged and better able to analyze their needs and strengths. A key component of student self-assessment is the regular co-construction of learning goals. This process helps the students understand themselves as learners, helps them understand strengths and needs, and gives them the language to articulate their progress as readers.

Through regular conversations and conferences with teachers and their peers, students become more in tune with their own learning. Through reference to anchor charts, descriptors of what effective readers do, and shared analysis of their own strengths, they better understand where they are going and what they need to do to get there.

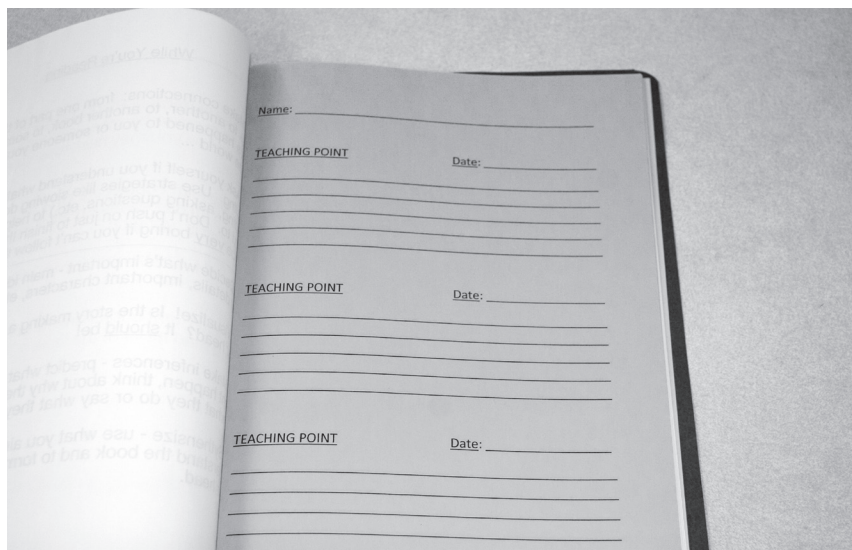A self-assessment can take many forms. Some common self-assessment tools include

- checklists to record the presence of specific skills and characteristics
- rating scales to encourage thought about the frequency or quality of particular attitudes, behaviours, and skills
- rubrics to identify the criteria for a learning experience and degree of accomplishment

- open-ended questions to encourage consideration and reflection of reading behaviours
- questionnaires, interest inventories, and surveys to elicit student's perceptions about their learning and to provide insight into attitudes and interests
- reflective writing to identify ways and the degree to which students have demonstrated progress

With younger students, self-assessment can become a regular part of a conversation or conference. (See Appendices D1 and D2.)

Things to Think About

- How does what I am teaching deepen my students' understanding?
- How do I create goals that reflect individual student development?
- How do I share the goal setting with my students?
- How am I helping my students to develop a common language that helps them understand themselves as readers and writers?
- What types of opportunities do I give my students to reflect on their progress? (conversations, journals, portfolios, surveys)

Check It Out

Brailsford, Anne, and Tony Stead. *Grade Three Reading Guide.* **Scholastic, 2007.**

Collins, Kathy. *Growing Readers.* **Stenhouse, 2004.**

Davies, Anne. *Making Classroom Assessment Work,* **3rd edition. Connections Publishing, 2011.**

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Guiding Readers and Writers (Grades 3–6).* **Heinemann, 2001, Appendices 5–7, 12–14, 46–47, 52–53.**

Routman, Regie. *Reading Essentials.* **Heinemann, 2002, p. 113.**

Stiggins, Richard J. *Student-Centered Classroom Assessment,* **2nd edition. Merrill Publishing, 1997.**

Strickland, Dorothy S., Kathy Ganske, and Joanne K. Monroe. *Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers.* **Stenhouse, 2002, p. 199.**

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book.* **Thompson Nelson, 2004, pp. 48, 518, 529–531, 537.**

Portfolios

Portfolios offer students and teachers the opportunity to consider growth and literacy development over time. These collections of student work provide a clearer and more complete picture of the learner and can offer students the opportunity to engage in reflection and assessment of their own learning.

Using Reading Records

I am strongly aware of the value of reading records as a vital source of information that guides my instructional planning for my students. Once the reading records are analyzed, I know what reading goals to set for them. In a small-group setting, I am fortunate to be able to provide solid book introductions in order to help set up my students for reading success. As the students are reading their "just right" books at their instructional level, they are able to read it with increased independence. Providing my student with "just right" books is key, as this allows me to pull a student aside to perform a reading record without being interrupted. With focused instruction and ongoing reading records, I am able to monitor my student's reading progress and collect evidence of growth over time. As a former Reading Recovery teacher, reading records have become an addictive habit. It just becomes a natural part of my day!

~ grade 2 teacher

5. Oral Reading Records

An oral reading record is a classroom assessment that provides teachers with information about how a student processes instructional level text. The purpose of a reading record is to determine what a student has under control in reading. This information is used by the teacher to reflect on individual student progress and to plan the next steps of instruction.

As the teacher and student sit side by side, the teacher observes, listens, and records the student's reading behaviours and problem-solving strategies on instructional-level text.

Reading Record Procedures

Step 1

Based on your knowledge of the student as a reader, make an estimate of the student's approximate instructional reading level. Since this is an estimate, have lower and higher level books or passages available.

Step 2

Introduce the oral reading record procedure to the student by using your own words to say, "I have some stories for you to read. You and I will work together to find a story that shows me where you are with your reading. I'll tell you the name of each story, and the names of the people in the stories. I'll also tell you something to think about as you read. Then, you'll have a chance to read the story silently. After you've read the story silently, I'll listen as you read the story out loud. As you read, I'll make some notes about your reading, and then we'll talk about the story. When we're all finished, I'll share my notes about your reading with you."

Step 3

Place the levelled passage in front of the student and use the introduction suggested in the Reading Assessment Form to introduce the passage and the purpose for reading.

Step 4

Allow time for the student to read the passage silently. Do not offer assistance. If the student comments that the book is too difficult, choose a passage at a lower level.

Step 5

After the student has read the passage silently, listen to the student read the story orally. Code the student's reading on the template provided in Part One of the Reading Assessment Form. (Suggested codes are found on page 58.) Teachers who are comfortable with the administration of oral reading records may choose to use a blank sheet of paper instead of the templates provided in the Reading Assessment Form. This requires less preparation time.

Note: The oral reading record provides information about what a student has under control at the instructional level; therefore it is not a time to provide instruction or to help. As the student reads, do not offer any prompts such as "try that again," "sound it out," "check that," or "go back and reread." If a student asks for help, say, "give it a try." If the student requests further assistance, tell the student the word and record this assistance as a "told" (T). A "told" is scored as an error.

Step 6

As the student reads, the teacher listens for and records his or her level of reading fluency, using the fluency rubric below, which is from Part 3 of the Reading Assessment Form.

Listening for Reading Fluency

Fluency is a measure of how well the student integrates rate, phrasing, and prosody.

Rate: a measure of how well a reader adjusts his reading speed to match the type of text or intent of the text. (Note: Rate is not measured by words per minute.)

Phrasing: a measure of how well the reader groups words into meaningful units.

Prosody: a measure of how well the reader uses rhythm, stress, and intonation.

Because students in the later part of the early stage and the transitional stage often read quickly, many teachers find it more effective to simply record miscues. Rather than coding a check mark for each word read correctly, a word with no coding is considered to have been read correctly.

Using an instructional level of 90% and above accuracy ensures the oral reading record provides information about what a student CAN do. At this level, the student has enough control of the sources of information and problem solving strategies to demonstrate how he or she processes new information. Accuracy below 90% does not provide this information, because the child does not have enough control of the sources of information (cueing systems) or problem solving strategies to process new information effectively.

Fluency Rubric

1	little expression, word-by-word reading, no smooth or expressive interpretation
2	mostly two-word phrases, with occasional three- and four-word groupings; no smooth or expressive interpretation
3	smooth expressive reading with some appropriate pauses and observation of punctuation; primarily three- or four-word phrase groups
4	smooth expressive reading, emphasizing key words and phrases; observes punctuation

Step 7

As the student reads, make a mental note of the percentage of errors. If the student reads with less than 90% accuracy, the passage is too hard and the administration of the oral reading record on that passage stops. No Comprehension Conversation occurs. The teacher chooses a book at a lower level and uses his or her own words to say "I think I've chosen a story that's not the best one. Let's finish reading this story together and then I'll give you another to read by yourself." **Then start the oral reading record procedure again at step 3.**

Step 8

When the student scores 90+% accuracy, go to the Comprehension Conversation in Part Two of the Reading Assessment Form.

- If the student completes the Comprehension Conversation successfully, go to a higher level.
- If the student does not complete the Comprehension Conversation successfully, go to a lower level and begin again at step 3.

In addition to the codes, many teachers find it helpful to add some additional information or anecdotal notes on the reading record. These notes reflect the information the student is using as he or she reads, and add significantly to the value of the oral reading record.

Sample 1: If a student pauses while reading, it is an indication that the student is noticing something doesn't make sense, sound right, or look right.

(looked at picture and reread)
Example: ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ P ✓ ✓ ✓

This "P" and accompanying note provide the teacher with information that the student is actively engaged in meaning making.

Sample 2: If a student sounds out a difficult word, the teacher may jot down the student's attempt.

Example: s-s-s-sn --sna---snake ✓

Anecdotal Note: student looked up and smiled

The ✓ indicates the student's word work resulted in the correct word.

The anecdotal note indicates that the student was aware of his or her problem-solving.

Example: s-s-s-sn-snk
        snake

Anecdotal Note: student made an "I don't know" shrug and read on.

This coding indicates the student has some awareness of using letter-sound correspondence. There is no ✓, which indicates an error.

The anecdotal note indicates the student was aware he or she didn't read the word; it may also indicate he or she did not have an alterate way to problem solve.

Note: Teachers should feel comfortable using their shorthand or icons for their anecdoctal notes.

Step 9
A Comprehension Conversation occurs when the student demonstrates 90–94% reading accuracy. Prompts for the Comprehension Conversation are found in Part Two of the Reading Assessment Form. The Comprehension Conversation is designed to provide information about each student; as such, it provides space for additional questions and topics of conversation.

Step 10

When the oral reading record is complete, and before the analysis of the errors and behaviours begins, the teacher quickly reviews his or her notes and chooses information to share with the student. This conversation begins with the teacher noting something that the student has under control. Then, the teacher provides an introduction to a next steps lesson. (See sample conversations below.)

Sample Conversation 1

Teacher: "All of these marks on the page give me information about your reading. Here's what I noticed: You're reading is just like a storyteller's reading. You made it sound really scary in this part [teacher points]. Maybe tomorrow, at our class meeting, you can show the class how you did that. I also noticed that this sentence had a tricky word in it. Please try that sentence again, and we'll talk about that word."

(Student reads `st-st-st`).

Teacher: "You knew what to do with those first two letters. Let's look for some more information." [Teacher isolates the next two letters "ar" and provides a quick lesson on how to combine "*st*" and "*ar*" into a meaningful word and asks the student to reread that section of the story. The teacher makes a note to reinforce this lesson about using visual information in the next guided reading session.]

Sample Conversation 2

Teacher: "I learned a lot about your reading today. Here's what some of the notes on this page tell me about your reading." [Teacher points to the student's substitution of house/horse]

"When you read the story, you said '*house'* and thought you made an error. But, when you were talking to me about the story, you knew the story was about a horse. This tells me that you noticed your error and you fixed it in your head. That's what good readers do! Can you tell me how you figured that out?" [Teacher notes how the student explains this and makes a note for a future lesson that reinforces the student's problem solving and provides the student with an additional way to problem solve.]

Sample Conversation 3

Teacher: "I noticed that you smiled when you read this page. Can you tell me why you were smiling?" [Teacher listens to the student response]

Teacher: "You really connected with this story, and it made you smile. That shows you really understood that part of the story. I also noticed that when you read this page, you seemed to be a little unsure. This mark shows me that you stopped and looked at the word, but it seemed as if you weren't sure what to. Here's a hint; when we notice that something doesn't make sense or it's tricky, it's a good idea to go back and reread the section before the tricky part. That often gives us more information to think about what would make sense. Let's try it together."

[Teacher and student try this together and the teacher makes a note to reinforce this problem-solving strategy. The teacher has noticed this pattern emerging among many students, so she plans to teach the rereading strategy in a whole-group lesson, followed by additional small-group lessons where extra attention is needed.]

Scoring the Reading Record for Accuracy

Accuracy is an important indicator in supporting the student's comprehension and problem solving.

1. Count substitutions, omissions, insertions, and tolds as errors.

2. Count multiple attempts at a word as one error (including proper nouns, such as names and places).

3. Repetitions, rereading, and self-corrections are not errors—these are positive reading behaviours.

4. The number of words read correctly multiplied by 100, divided by the total number of words in the selection gives the percentage of accuracy. This indicates whether or not the text is an instructional level.

$$\frac{230 - 13}{230} \text{ errors} = \frac{217}{230} = 94 \text{ percent}$$

- 95 percent and above indicates that the text was read at an independent level
- 90–94 percent indicates that the text is at a suitable level for instruction
- below 90 percent indicates that the text is a difficult text; it is not suitable for instruction

Calculating Self–Corrections

A self-correction is made independently without a teacher prompt. To calculate the self-correction ratio:

1. Add the number of errors (E) to the number of self-corrections (SC).

2. Divide by the number of self-corrections (SC). For example, if a student made 9 errors and 3 self-corrections, the total miscues would be 12, but 3 were self-corrected. The self-correction ratio in this case would be 1:4. For example,

$$\frac{E + SC}{SC} = \frac{9 + 3}{3} = \frac{12}{3} = 4 \text{ therefore ratio 1:4}$$

A self-correction ratio of 1:2 to 1:4 indicates that the student is noticing errors and is able to correct most errors that he or she makes.

Analyzing the Student Reading

The process of analyzing the student's oral reading record gives credit to the student for the source(s) of information and problem-solving strategies he or she uses when reading at an instructional level (90–94% accuracy). To complete this process

- scan over the oral reading record, review the ✓s and develop of sense of what the student has under control

- analyze the student's errors and self-corrections to determine his or her use of the sources of information (see Analyzing Errors below)

- reflect on anecdotal notes about the student's use of problem-solving strategies

There are four sources of information: pragmatic, meaning (M), structure (S), and visual (V). (See Sources of Information on pages 17–18.)

While pragmatics has implications for all aspects of reading, the oral reading record provides teachers with an opportunity to focus in on information about the student's use of meaning, structure, and visual information.

Sources of Information

Context: pragmatic

Meaning (M): semantic
Does it make sense?

Structure (S): syntactic
Does it sound right?

Visual (V): graphophonic
Does it look right?

Analyzing Errors

Errors include substitutions, insertions, omissions, and tolds. While substitutions are always analyzed, some professional judgment, which is based on an understanding of the impact of an error on the text, is necessary to determine if omissions, insertions, and tolds are analyzed.
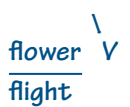
For each error, put a mark in the error (E) column of the Reading Assessment Form. For each error, ask yourself:

- Does the error make sense in this sentence? If so, place an M in the M (Meaning) column. This gives the student credit for maintaining meaning.

- Does the error maintain the grammatical structure (syntax) of the sentence? If so, place an S in the S (Structure) column. This gives the student credit for maintaining structure.

- Does the error have a visual similarity to the word in the text? If so, place a V in the V (Visual) column. This gives the student credit for using visual information.

Note: More than one source of information may be noted for each error.

> Total number of errors can be recorded at the top of the column under "E."

Vignette

When I record the use of visual information, I use a mark to show if the student uses visual information from the beginning of the word, the middle of the word, or the end of the word. Here's what it looks like:

Sample	Description
\ flower V flight	\ This line indicates the student used information from the beginning of the word.
/ running V jumping	/ This line indicates the student used information from the end of the word.
\ / flying V floating	\ / These lines indicate the student used information from the beginning and the end of the word.

~ grade 1/2 teacher

Retelling

A reading record is one of the main assessment tools I use to provide evidence of what my readers can do. With the analysis of the sources of information the student uses to read accurately, to self-correct, and at points of difficulty, I am able to determine what he or she is able to do independently. I can also decide what information I need to teach him or her to build on what is already under control. It is only through careful analysis that I find that balance between what the student already knows and how to support future growth.

~ grade primary teacher

Analyzing Self-Corrections

A self-correction is made independently, without a teacher prompt. To analyze a self-correction, the teacher determines which **additional** source(s) of information the student used to self-correct each error.

For each self-correction, place a mark in the self-correction column. For each self-correction, ask yourself:

- Did the student use meaning to self-correct the error?
  If so, place a ✔ in the **M** (Meaning) column.
- Did the student use information about the grammatical structure (syntax) of the passage to self correct the error?
  If so, place a ✔ in the **S** (Structure) column.
- Did the student use visual or graphophonic (letter/sound) information to correct the error?
  If so, place a ✔ in the V (Visual) column.

Note: More than one source of information may be noted for each self-correction.

Making Note of Problem-Solving Strategies

The following problem-solving strategies provide valuable information about how the student processes text.

Notes about problem-solving strategies can be made within the coding, or in the margins, of the oral reading record (see sample Reading Assessment Forms). These notes, in combination with the sources of information used, provide the teacher with valuable information about how a student processes instructional-level text. The teachers' review of these notes provides insight into the next steps of instruction.

Monitoring: The student notices when an error is made. The student may pause to reflect, look up at the teacher, point to the word, or indicate in some other way that he or she is aware the passage no longer makes sense, sounds right, or looks right. This is an important step in a student's reading development. A student who monitors, understands that text must have meaning.

Searching: The student searches for information about how to solve the error so the text makes sense, sounds right, and looks right. The student may reread and try again, sound out a word, read ahead and try again, look at the picture, refer to a text box, or ask for help. As the student searches, the teacher notes the range of searching strategies the student has under control.

Checking: The student indicates by word or action that he or she knows that searching has corrected the error and the text now makes sense, sounds right, and looks right.

Use the Reading Record to Inform Individual or Small-Group Instruction

As the teacher reviews the reading record, the focus should not be on a particular error, but on patterns of reading behaviour. Patterns that indicate the student or group has certain behaviours under control provide the foundation on which to build the next steps instruction. Marie Clay (1991) referred to this process "as going from the known to the new."

Using the Reading Record During Parent/Guardian Interviews

The reading record is a useful tool to share information about the student's reading progress with his or her parent/guardian. The teacher reviews the reading records of the last few weeks and looks for evidence of change. Once noted, this evidence is shared with the parent/guardian. This conversation begins with the teacher sharing information about student progress, and then moves to what the student presently has under control, and finally to the focus and expectations of upcoming instruction. This discussion provides the parent/guardian with information about their child's learning and also provides some insight into how effective text processing develops.

Suggested Codes for Oral Reading Records

Accurate Reading Reads words accurately	Place a check above each word read correctly. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Lee went to the store.
ERRORS	
Substitution Student substitutes a word for the word in the text	Write the substituted word above the word in the text. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ school Lee went to the store.
Omission Student omits a word in the text	Place a dash above the omitted word. ✓ — ✓ ✓ ✓ Lee went to the store.
Insertion Student adds a word that is not in the text	Mark the place of insertion with a caret (ˆ). Write the inserted word above the caret. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ big ✓ Lee went to the^store.
Told Student asks for help; teacher provides word	Place a "T" above the word told to the student. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ T Lee went to the store.
SELF–CORRECTIONS (when the student corrects an error with NO prompt from the teacher)	
Self-Correction Student notices and corrects error without a cue from the teacher.	Place an "SC" beside a self corrected error. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ school│SC Lee went to the store.│

In addition to coding accurate reading, errors and self–corrections, note the following.

Repeated Word Student repeats a word (this is not an error)	Place an "R" above a repeated word. If the word is repeated more than one time, indicate the number of repeats with a subscripted number. (R_3) ✓ ✓ ✓ R✓ ✓ Lee went to the store.
Reread Phrase/Sentence Student rereads a section of text, such as a phrase or sentence (this is not an error)	Place an arrow above the repeated phrase or sentence and place an R where the repeat begins. R ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Lee went to the store.
Appeal Student asks for help	If a student asks for help, place an "A" (Appeal) above the word requested and provide the cue "Try it." If the student reads the word correctly, place a check above the word. ✓ A✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Lee went to the store. *Note: If the student continues to request assistance, say the word and place a "T" (Told) beside the "A". As indicated above, a Told is an error.* ✓ A│ ✓ ✓ ✓ Lee went│to the store.

Using the Information

The information that is collected from an oral reading record can be used in many ways:

- to determine the strategies a student is using
- to determine the sources of information used
- to determine whether the text is too difficult for the student
- to make decisions about future instruction based on the kinds of miscues made by the student, and by their scores on the fluency rubric
- to provide feedback to the student
- to share with parents/guardians and other teachers

Interpreting the Evidence

Simply using the tools and gathering the evidence is not enough. The purpose for all this evidence gathering is to improve instruction for students. The evidence provides teachers with information of both snapshots and patterns.

A **snapshot** is what we see when examining a single piece of evidence. It is what the student was able to do at that moment in time, as a result of what they learned up to this point. By comparing evidence over time, teachers can see trends emerging in the student's progress and behaviours. This is how growth is measured. Through co-construction of reading goals, students can become a part of this process.

A **pattern** is the tracking of student growth and behaviours over time. Trends also emerge through careful examination of all the evidence. A teacher might notice that several students have similar needs and would benefit from instruction in a particular area of focus. A teacher might also notice that many students have similar misunderstandings or confusion.

These trends are the evidence that guide teachers to make decisions about instructional contexts. Should they be teaching or reteaching something to the whole class, pulling together a small group for an explicit purpose, or working with a single student whose needs are unique?

Check It Out

Clay, Marie M. *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement.* Heinemann, 2006.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Benchmark Assessment System 1, Assessment Guide.* Heinemann, 2008.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Active Young Readers Grades 4–6 Assessment Resource: A Teaching Resource,* 2003, pp. 31–34.
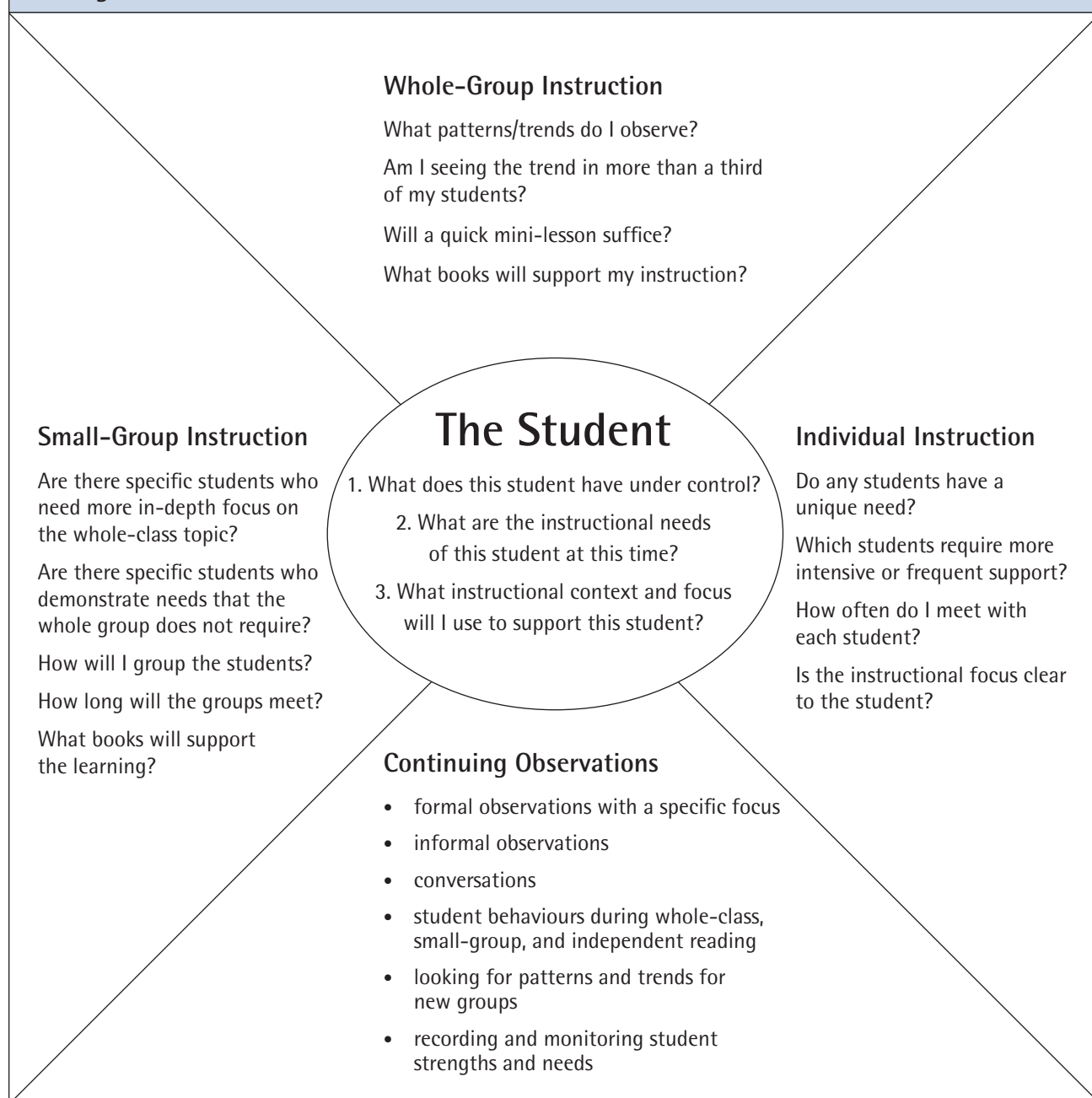
Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* Heinemann, 2000.

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Grades 1–2 Teacher's Resource Book.* Thompson Nelson, 2004.

Trehearne, Miriam. *Nelson Language Arts, Kindergarten Teacher's Resource Book.* Thompson Nelson, 2003.

Trehearne, Miriam, et al. *Comprehensive Literacy Resource for Grades 3–6 Teachers.* Thompson Nelson, 2006.

Making Instructional Decisions Based on Assessment

Whole-Group Instruction

What patterns/trends do I observe?

Am I seeing the trend in more than a third of my students?

Will a quick mini-lesson suffice?

What books will support my instruction?

The Student

1. What does this student have under control?

2. What are the instructional needs of this student at this time?

3. What instructional context and focus will I use to support this student?

Small-Group Instruction

Are there specific students who need more in-depth focus on the whole-class topic?

Are there specific students who demonstrate needs that the whole group does not require?

How will I group the students?

How long will the groups meet?

What books will support the learning?

Individual Instruction

Do any students have a unique need?

Which students require more intensive or frequent support?

How often do I meet with each student?

Is the instructional focus clear to the student?

Continuing Observations

- formal observations with a specific focus
- informal observations
- conversations
- student behaviours during whole-class, small-group, and independent reading
- looking for patterns and trends for new groups
- recording and monitoring student strengths and needs

Things to Think About

- Do I have information about this student's interests and background knowledge?
- How am I using the evidence?
- What patterns and trends do I notice?
- How do I need to change my instruction based on the analysis of the evidence?
- How do I clearly communicate my findings to the students?
- How do I help students set reasonable goals for practising skills and strategies?
- Do I provide instructional experiences in a meaningful context?
- How am I building in opportunities for students to analyze their own progress?

Using Evidence to Inform Instruction

When teachers gather and analyze evidence as an ongoing part of their practice, it means that assessment is embedded in the instruction process. We see this in all areas of instruction, such as

- setting goals with students that build on what they have under control
- whole-class focus on a specific strategy (comprehension)
- scaffolded support for all students
- ample opportunity for guided practice (shared and guided experiences) before expectation of independence
- students reading books they can really read during independent practice time
- teacher working with small groups or individuals while other students are reading
- teacher making anecdotal notes and recording conference information in a deliberate and systematic form
- students engaged in problem solving at "instructional level" during guided reading
- students involved in the process

> " *The whole purpose of assessment is to find out what children do well and what we need to teach them.* "
>
> Taberski, *On Solid Ground* (2000, p. 80)

Clare asked for a conference because she was not understanding the book she was reading. As I listened to her read, I noted that she was ignoring the punctuation and, even when I called her attention to it, she was unsure of its use. I was very pleased that she recognized that meaning had broken down, and I praised her for asking for the conference. As we discussed the role of punctuation using examples from her book, I decided that this was an area of instruction that would also be beneficial to many other students. It became the focus for a mini-lesson the next day, and the focus for practising by many other students later in the day.

~ grade 2 teacher

Things to Think About

- Do I know my students well enough to make instructional decisions?

- Do I have an understanding and appreciation of how each student's interests and experiences have the potential to enrich the learning experience?

- Do I capitalize on these interests and experiences by ensuring the topics of conversation, areas of study, and texts chosen value and build on those interests and experiences?

- What information am I using to make instructional decisions?

- Do I meet with all my students on a regular basis?

- Do I share what I discover with them so they can learn about their own learning?

- Have I taught a variety of instructional and organizational mini-lessons to support the classroom community?

- How am I making the optimal use of my instructional time?

- How am I using all the evidence I collect? Why am I collecting it?

Planning for Instruction

From the gathering, interpretation, and consideration of the evidence gathered, teachers are able to make decisions about the skills and strategies a student has under control and those that are in development, the kinds of experiences students require, and the nature or structure of these learning experiences. Decisions about how instruction will occur and for whom this instruction will be provided are important.

There will be a number of areas that teachers will identify as essential for all students. This whole-group work will reflect specific topics in curriculum and/or be a result of examining patterns and trends through assessment. The whole-class instruction can take many forms. Opportunities for reading aloud, reading and thinking aloud, shared reading experiences (small- and whole-group) and mini-lessons provide teachers with the means to teach very specific concepts, skills, or ideas. Other aspects of reading instruction may be necessary only for selected groups of students or even individuals. This kind of instruction may occur during small-group or guided reading experiences, and may further be practised and applied during independent reading.

In grades primary–3, teachers have an uninterrupted 60-minute block of time for reading and reading instruction. The structure of this time is often a reading workshop, defined by a "time to teach," a larger block of "time to practise," and culminating with a "time to share and reflect."

Components of Reading Instruction and Assessment

Time to Teach	Time to Practice	Time to Share and Reflect

What?
• thinking processes
• reading strategies
• comprehension strategies
• text features
• fluency
• elements of genre
  – fiction/non-fiction
  – poetry
• concepts of print
 	
How?
Explicitly teach through
• read-aloud/think-aloud
• modelling
• shared reading
• mini-lesson
 	
Materials such as
• picture books
• short passages from longer text
• mentor text
• enlarged text/LCD
• anchor charts
• multi Media
	Students:
	
	Independent Reading
	with an awareness of the
	stages of reading development
	(Emergent, Early, Transitional, Fluent)
	Teaching in Action:
	Grades Primary–3, p. 25
	
	Teacher: Guided Reading (small-group instruction); individual student conferences; ongoing reading assessments
	
	In addition to independent reading practice, other reading experiences may include
	• reading with a partner
	• making book choices
	• responding in writing and other ways of representing
	
	• using technology
	• literacy centres
	• literature circles
	• book talks
	• book clubs
	• Readers' Theatre
	• talking about their reading
		Share and Reflect on Instructional Purpose
		• whole class
		• small group
		• individual
		
		Examples
		• celebrate success
		• share application of strategy taught
		• talk about …
		• personal reflections
		• book talk
		• self-assessment
		• think-pair-share
		• set/revisit personal goals
		• plan next steps

Instructional Approaches

Once a teacher has identified the focus for instruction, the next decision is to decide who would benefit from this instruction and then how the instruction will occur. Below is a brief description of some of the ways instruction can occur. Time and frequency will vary with the stage of reading development and the needs of each class or student. Regardless of instructional approach, the teacher ensures wide ranging and long lasting opportunities for student talk and involvement.

Read–Aloud

Choose a text that reflects the interests of some or all of the students. Before beginning, the teacher shares the reason for this book choice with the class. The teacher reads the text aloud, modelling phrasing, fluency, and expression. The teacher also demonstrates a love of reading. Read-aloud texts are at a higher level than students can read on their own and expose students to a wide range of genres.

Read-Aloud/Think-Aloud, Interactive Reading

The teacher reads aloud, but engages the students more directly in the reading. By pausing at strategic points, posing questions, or modelling a strategy, or by thinking aloud about processing the text, the teacher invites the students to be more actively involved in the reading.

Mini-Lessons / Focus-Lessons

These are short but specific lessons that address a specific skill, strategy, idea, expectation, or routine. During a mini-lesson the teacher states what is being taught, models and demonstrates, and provides opportunity for practice.

Shared Reading

Shared reading provides opportunities for all students to take part in the reading of a common text that is of interest to the students. Using big books, shared or buddy texts, or enlarging text on chart paper, interactive white board, or projector the teacher reads and invites students to join in on familiar parts as they are able. Shared reading is a critical opportunity for instruction during the reading workshop.

Small-Group Reading

Contexts that are traditionally regarded as "whole class" also work very effectively in smaller groups.

Read-alouds are a wonderful opportunity to personalize a text, to illustrate key points to specific students, or to reinforce the pleasure of reading for students who need to see and experience that.

Shared reading, the powerhouse of the instructional contexts, can also be used as a small-group instruction for a group of students with similar needs.

Guiding Reading

In small groups, students read a text that presents challenges necessary for their further development of reading skills and strategies. Through careful assessment, the teacher selects the group members, the text, and the focus for instruction. Texts are at a student's instructional level (see pages 25 and 51). The guided reading session usually involves a book introduction, time for the students to practise the strategy by reading independently, and a wrap-up discussion. During guided reading, teachers often listen to individuals read and/or use the opportunity to assess progress. This may also include goal setting, in collaboration with the student.

Literature Circles, Reading Conversations, Book Clubs

Students work in small groups to discuss their reactions to, observations of, and feelings about texts. The texts selected for literature discussions are at the student's independent reading level since the teacher is not an official part of the group.

Independent Reading

This is a focused block of time during readers' workshop when students practise their skills and strategy use on their own. Students are reading texts that are very comfortable for them to read on their own (i.e., independent-level text). More mature readers record their choices and read silently. All readers are developing stamina and are able to read independently for increasingly long blocks of time. The teacher may choose to use this time to confer with individuals or small groups, or to do small-group instruction as part of a guided experience or literature discussion.

Building on Reading

Begin by praising what the student has done well and what the student has under control. Then select **one area** for improvement or goal setting. When students feel successful, they want to build on that success. When they are overwhelmed with too many "errors" or things that need fixing, they often become confused and frustrated.

Student Behaviour	Teacher Action
Many students have a similar confusion.	Reteach to the whole class. Teach in a new way.
Several students are struggling with the same concept.	Form a small group to re-teach a concept. Modify the teaching approach.
A student's reading is slow and mechanical.	Model during read-aloud or shared reading. Provide opportunities for Readers' Theatre. Encourage reading easy and familiar texts. Record the reader and have them listen to their own voice. Choral read with the student.
A student relies too heavily on visual information.	Ask the student, "Does that make sense?" Ask the student to justify his or her word choice by giving evidence. Explicitly demonstrate linking pictures with letters and sounds. Provide a cloze activity in which the student predicts from contexts rather than from initial letters.
A student does not use visual information and makes inaccurate substitutions.	Ask the student, "Does that make sense?" Ask the student, "Does that look right?" Prompt the student to look at the letters in the word.
A student is not monitoring for meaning or accuracy.	Model through think-aloud how good readers read for meaning. Model how to read accurately by checking a word against other sources of information—Does it look right? Sound right? Make sense? Model how readers sometimes lose meaning and then re-establish meaning through rereading. Give the student some prompts to help them monitor their own reading.
A student does not make connections or relate the text to his or her prior experience and knowledge.	Demonstrate how to use sticky notes to make text-to-self or text-to-text connections. Provide ample talk time to explore connections. Use texts that allow students to use their prior knowledge. Model making connections for the student.

Student Behaviour	Teacher Action
A student is not able to pick out the main ideas of a text.	In read-aloud, demonstrate how a reader highlights or underlines important facts or ideas. In shared or guided experiences, show how to underline or highlight important facts or ideas. Set a purpose for the reading. Provide ample talk time during and after shared reading or read-aloud experiences. Ask students to predict for read-aloud. Record, or have them record, prediction, inference, and other important ideas. Use these notes as a basis for response. Show how certain text features (key words, headings, captions) highlight important ideas.
A student is not able to make inferences or read between the lines.	Use inference as a focus for read-aloud, shared reading, or guided reading. Chart inferences and answers to questions such as "How do you know?" and "Why?" Use pictures books and chart inferences made as a result of events or ideas in the story (e.g., "The dog ran to the door and barked" may imply that someone is coming to the door).
A student is not able to use the text to find supporting evidence for a point of view or interpretation.	Model finding evidence—"I think … because it says here …" Use as a focus for demonstration, shared practice, and guided sessions, encouraging students to take a point of view and find a text reference to support it. Use questions that require students to refer to the text for an answer.
A student does not effectively make use of diagrams, graphs, or maps.	Use read-aloud and think-aloud to model how to read and interpret graphic information. Encourage students to work in pairs to discuss these text features. Focus on a few features at a time and provide multiple examples of texts for exploration.
A student is "stuck" on patterned text (varying levels of support).	Introduce a book. Have the student try it with support. Do an oral reading record the next day. Introduce a book. Read to the student. Have the student try it. Do an oral reading record the next day. Introduce a book. Read to the student. Have the student read with you. Have the student try by themselves. Do an oral reading record the next day. Repeat the above over two to three days.

Reporting on Evidence of Learning

Communicating the information gathered from assessment and evaluation to everyone involved in the process is an important part of the teacher's role. Evidence of learning is shared

- with the student as part of a co-construction of goals
- with parents/guardians in a variety of forms (part of the teacher's communication plan, student-led conference, report cards)
- with other professionals, if additional support is necessary
- as a student moves to another teacher

Things to Think About

- What progress has the student made and what evidence do I have?
- What areas need attention in the next stage of the student's development?
- What are the future reading goals for the student?
- How often and in what ways do I involve the student in the assessment process?
- What role does student self-assessment play in my classroom?
- In what effective and varied ways do I report to parents/guardians?
- Have I provided regular descriptive feedback to the student as often and as quickly as possible?

Understanding Texts

Types of Texts

Classrooms in Nova Scotia are filled with texts. The features and structures of these texts are important learning supports for young readers. A rich classroom library is filled with a wide variety of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry across a wide range of interests, levels, and topics. Through this variety, teachers provide books and digital texts that are accessible to all the readers in the classroom.

Your classroom library might include

- picture books
- magazines
- poetry
- reference books
- series books
- mysteries
- science fiction
- biography
- fairy tales
- books that address childhood issues
- persuasive text
- instruction and procedures
- humour
- comic books
- riddles
- digital texts

Check It Out

Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Reading.* Addison Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 2001.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency, K–8.* Heinemann, 2006, pp. 123–137.

Nova Scotia Department of Education. *Teaching in Action Grades Primary–3*, 2006, pp. 4–6.

Routman, Regie. *Reading Essentials.* Heinemann, 2002, pp. 63–81.

Taberski, Sharon. *Comprehension from the Ground Up.* Heinemann, 2011, pp. 51–52, 57–61, 188–200.

Taberski, Sharon. *It's All about Comprehension.* Heinemann, pp. 133–135.

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* Heinemann, 2000, pp. 22–24, 136–151.

Sharon Taberski, in *Comprehension from the Ground Up* (2011, p. 52), suggests that children need to choose a balance of three types of books for their own reading:

- "Just right" books at the student's independent reading level. These are the books in which students can practise their skills and strategies and build their confidence as readers.
- "Look" books. These are the books that are too difficult for independent reading but from which students can still learn something.
- Easy Books. These are the books that are familiar and that students can read easily.

Vignette

Student Ideas on How to Choose Text That Is Right for Them
"I know how to tell, 'cause I know when it feels right."
"When I know I can settle in good with the book."
"When I read, it's not too hard, not too easy, it's just right."
"I know how to tell if it's good for me, do you want me to teach you?"
"I sound like a storyteller."
"They say, 'Don't judge a book by its cover,' but I do—the cover tells me a lot!"

Digital Text

While the overarching goal of comprehension remains constant, there are a few variables in presentation and structure that influence student reading. The key advantage of digital texts are the voice and other audio supports, use of colour, animation, navigation, and interactivity that supports student to student collaboration and response.

Data within a spreadsheet or database can bring reading, writing, and representing together as a powerful meaning-making activity.

Applying search strategies, using tools such as search engines and website search functionality, requires students to consider their need for information and to select search criteria and terms. The ease with which students can adjust criteria and try "what if" with data engages them in reading and many forms of problem solving relating to texts. Strategies include skimming, scanning, identification of main idea, assessment of currency, accuracy, point of view, and voice.

Text Structure

Text structure refers to the way a text is organized. Students need to learn about texts presented in different formats, such as magazines, books, digital text, big books, and media text (posters, brochures). Narrative text and information text each have distinct structures; each is determined by the author's intent and purpose in writing. The role of read-aloud and shared reading in introducing these types of text is critical. Teacher modelling and shared experiences create a familiarity with particular text structures and support student comprehension of the books they read on their own at other points in the day.

Narrative text typically has the following structure:

beginning   middle   end

Students easily recognize this structure, and this familiarity supports their reading of the text. In addition to the structure, narrative text has some other common elements:

- setting
- character
- plot
- conflict
- theme
- point of view

Information text may not fit within the same text structure as narrative text. Common text patterns for information text include the following:

Text Pattern	Definition
description	uses language to help the reader visualize what is being described by the author
sequence	presents ideas or events in the order in which they occur
compare and contrast	discusses two or more ideas, events, or phenomena, explaining how they are similar and different
cause and effect	provides explanations or reasons for an event/occurrence as well as the results and impact
problem/solution	identifies problems and poses possible solutions
question and answer	poses a question and offers an answer of explanation

If students recognize various text structures, then they will be able to anticipate and make predictions about the text. These predictions provide a framework for the student's reading and can support the meaning-making process.

Text Features

Text features are the physical aspects of the text, such as layout of print and illustrations, plus tools, such as a glossary, an index, and sidebars. Understanding the role of punctuation marks, headings, charts, diagrams, and captions helps young readers make sense of text. Certain text features, such as author and illustrator names, publisher, and title, occur in most books and are easily understood, while others are less common and need explicit attention.

Text features that support young readers include

Print Features

- bold
- bullets
- colour
- font (type, size)
- italic
- underline

Visual Supports

- charts
- diagrams
- drawings
- enlarged photos
- labelled drawings
- maps
- photographs
- timelines

Organizational Supports

- captions
- glossary
- headings
- index
- labels
- page numbers
- table of contents
- text boxes
- titles

Text Characteristics by Stage of Reading Development

Fiction

	Emergent	Early	Transitional
Content, Themes, and Ideas	• everyday, familiar objects and situations • simple story lines	• often deals with everyday situations	• familiar and within own experience • settings for narrative text go beyond the reader's experience • characters encounter everyday experiences and some deal with serious problems and issues
Literacy Features	• direct correspondence between print and pictures • some wordless books	• few characters and little character development or change • simple plot • supported by familiar patterns • onomatopoeia	• more sophisticated plot • ranging from one to two characters to multiple characters • more character development and change in response to events in the story • memorable and well-developed characters • opportunities for empathy and suspense • introduces devices such as irony and whimsy

	Emergent	Early	Transitional
Vocabulary	• high-frequency words • simple labels or captions • one line of text per page • repeating language patterns	• many high frequency words • challenging words have contextual support	• many challenging words (multi-syllabic, unfamiliar, easily confused), new words relating to familiar concepts • sophisticated and varied vocabulary, often with contextual support • readers expected to form new meanings for known words
Sentence Complexity	• simple labels or sentences • patterned text	• moving from simple sentences to use of more literary language • assigned dialogue (said, answered, cried)	• many compound sentences with simple and complex sentences interspersed • complex sentences requiring a full range of punctuation to access meaning • moving from assigned dialogue (using names and pronouns to identify the speaker) to unassigned dialogue

	Emergent	Early	Transitional
Book and Print Features	• large print • one line of text per page • supportive illustrations • significant spacing	• large print • short text or chapters • limited amount of text per page • clear illustration on most pages to support understanding • significant spacing between words and lines • sentences begin at the left margin • multiple episodes related to a single plot	• smaller font, longer text • more print per page; some pages with full print • illustrations scattered throughout, usually black-and-white drawing or photographs • less space between words and lines • sentences end in the middle of a line and continue from one line to the next • several chapters

Information Text

	Emergent	Early	Transitional
Concepts, Themes, and Ideas	• everyday, familiar objects and situations	• familiar and concrete topics	• introduces new concepts • varied topics • elaboration of familiar topics • connects to prior knowledge • topics for information text that go beyond the reader's experience • requires more content knowledge • students expected to learn about the various subjects through reading
Vocabulary	• high-frequency words • simple labels or captions • one line of text per page	• few technical words • vocabulary explained within the text and illustrated	• more challenging words (multi-syllable, unfamiliar, easily confused) • more technical words • words and technical terms that are explained and illustrated within the text
Sentence Complexity	• simple labels or sentences	• mainly simple sentences with some compound sentences	• many simple sentences with simple and complex sentences interspersed • sentences requiring a full range of punctuation to access meaning

	Emergent	Early	Transitional
Book and Print Features	• large print • one line of text per page • supportive illustrations • significant spacing	• larger print • spacing between words and lines • sentences beginning at left margin • different concepts on each page or selection • clear illustrations on most pages to support understanding • basic diagrams with some labels • simple charts • captions • distinctive headings and subheadings • use of colour • short table of contents	• smaller font • more print per page; some pages with full print • sentences end in the middle of a line and continue from one line to the next • visual information scattered throughout; many pages have a half-page illustration on every page or every other page • illustrations that support the overall meaning but do not always relate directly to the print on the page • different concepts on each page or selection • more frequently includes index and glossary

Genre

Genre refers to the type and kind of writing. Common genres for fiction
and non-fiction texts found in primary–3 classrooms are below.

Genre	Definition
Traditional Literature	Traditional Literature began with oral stories passed down throughout history. It includes folktales (including fairy tales), myths, legends, and epics.
Fantasy	Fantasy contains unrealistic or unworldly elements. It includes science fiction.
Realistic Fiction	Realistic Fiction often focuses on universal human problems, events, and issues. Although it comes from the writer's imagination, it is true life or realistic.

Genre	Definition
Mystery	Mystery offers the reader suspense and wonder as the author reveals the plot and characters bit by bit. Central to this genre is the element of the unknown and the reader's attempt to solve the mystery using clues provided by the author.
Adventure	Adventure provides the reader with the opportunity to explore circumstances where characters experience new situations, overcome adversity, and grow as individuals. The plot is often fast paced and exciting.

Non-fiction

Type of Text	Definition
Information	Information text provides information and facts.
Expository	Expository text explains or provides direction.
Biographical	A biography is an account of an individual's life.
Autobiographical	An autobiography is an account of the life of an individual written by that individual.

The Role of Levelled Text

Levelled text refers to any group of books that have been organized along a gradient of difficulty (see Descriptors of Text Levels, pp. 84–86). Levelled text plays an important instructional role in grades primary to 3 classrooms, but it is never the only type of text found there. Many teachers choose to keep their levelled books in a special location to emphasize their role as one of many components in a classroom library. Others keep levelled books for instruction separate but have containers of books in broadly levelled tubs for students to explore.

Rather than stocking bookshelves with only levelled text, it is more important for teachers to be familiar with the supports and challenges in the texts. With knowledge about the students, and their interests, needs, and strengths, teachers are able to support them in making good text selections.

Vignette

How to Handle Levels

It is often a challenge to keep students (and their parents) from overusing levels to define themselves. I spend a lot of time with my students reinforcing how we all have different strengths and characteristics. Some people are taller or shorter, others wear glasses, some can play the piano, and others are great at soccer. In the same way, some of us read different kinds of books at different times. These ongoing discussions about respecting each other's learning and abilities pays off when I hear my students using these words to discuss their work and the work of others.

~ grade primary/1 teacher

Instructional level text is the level at which the student has just a few challenges and can be successful in reading a text with some support from the teacher. Reading success is important to the overall progress of a student, and the use of carefully selected text ensures this success. Students encounter success when they can recognize most of the words and understand most of the ideas/concepts in the text.

Vignette

A Different Way to Organize

I wanted to organize my books so that the levels were more discrete. Rather than labelling my baskets as A, B, C … I decided to label my baskets as "Beautiful books," "Exciting books," "Awesome books." Anyone who worked in my classroom realized that the first letter of these descriptive words indicated the levels; however, the students didn't. The students and I would refer to the books by these titles as well. Students placed less attention on what levels they were reading. I also placed these baskets in a non-sequential order that also helped to place less attention on reading levels.

~ grade primary teacher

What is a Text Gradient?

A text gradient is	A text gradient is not
• a tool for teachers to use in analyzing texts • a tool for teachers to use in selecting books for small-group reading instruction • a support for teachers in guiding readers' choice of books for independent reading (when necessary) • a guide to judging below, on, or above grade level reading	• a tool for students to use in selecting books for independent reading • a label for book baskets in a classroom library • a label that students should give to themselves • an incentive for students to practise reading • a label for a grade on a report card

(Source: Fountas and Pinnell, *Teaching for Comprehending and Fluency*, 2006, p. 153)

It is important for students to be reading text that matches their independent and instructional levels. An instructional text is one that offers enough challenge in decoding and comprehension that the student must problem solve and use a variety of reading strategies to monitor and extend reading. If the text is too difficult, then the student may become frustrated.

Teaching Tip

Students sometimes find it difficult to transition from the supports of patterned text to more challenging structures. Teachers must be observant in recognizing when a student is ready to make this transition. Statements such as, "I can read it with my eyes closed," "Do you want me to read it open or closed?" tell us that the student has internalized patterns and is ready for a greater challenge. A careful book walk is helpful for most students as they transition and recognize the changes in text format. For those few who find these changes challenging, the teacher must be even more explicit.

Check It Out

Brailsford, Anne, and Tony Stead. *Kindergarten Reading Guide.* Scholastic, 2006.

Brailsford, Anne, and Tony Stead. *Grade One Reading Guide.* Scholastic, 2006.

Brailsford, Anne, and Tony Stead. *Grade Two Reading Guide.* Scholastic, 2007.

Brailsford, Anne, and Tony Stead. *Grade Three Reading Guide.* Scholastic, 2007.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Leveled Books, K–8.* Heinemann, 2005.

Fountas, Irene C., and Gay Su Pinnell. *Matching Books to Readers.* Heinemann, 1999.

Pinnell, Gay Su, and Irene C. Fountas. *The Continuum of Literacy Learning,* Grades K–2. Heinemann, 2007, pp. 108–159.

Stead, Tony. *Good Choice!* Stenhouse, 2009, pp. 133–142.

Taberski, Sharon. *On Solid Ground.* Heinemann, 2000, pp. 137–140.

There are many factors to consider when assigning a level to a text (text features, vocabulary and sentence structure, content and themes) as well as the skills and strengths of the reader along with his or her prior knowledge and interests.

Strategies for supporting the book selection process include

- providing instruction to students about book selection
- modelling the book-selection process
- sorting books according to genre, form, author, and topic
- identifying the purpose for the choice (research, browsing, practise)
- identifying books that are challenging and exploring why
- setting aside some levelled text for assessment purposes
- discussing book selections with students
- providing students with a selection of books that are at their independent level for use during reading workshop
- encouraging book talks and conversations about texts

Descriptors of Text Levels

Level	Characteristics	Additional Notes
A	• wordless picture books • simple labels or captions • single line of text with direct picture support • high-frequency words and repeating patterns • large print with lots of white space	
B	• simple storyline • large print with lots of white space • one or two lines (return sweep) per page with direct picture support • more high-frequency words • more variety in punctuation and repeating patterns	
C	• more words and lines of print than levels A or B • some patterns but a shift to more varied patterns and complex structures (embedded clauses) • high-frequency words plus some easy-to-solve words • increase in types of punctuation, dialogue included	end-of-year target for grade primary
D	• slightly more complex stories with mostly familiar topics, but some abstract ideas • easy text layout with the addition of longer sentences • sentences carried over to another page • more compound words, multi-syllabic words • illustrations becoming less directly linked to print	
E	• generally longer than previous levels, with more pages and/or more lines of print • more complex text structure • wider variety of punctuation • information texts have more difficult ideas and concepts • more compound words, multi-syllabic words • texts move away from familiar situations	

Level	Characteristics	Additional Notes
F	• reflects patterns that are more characteristic of written language than spoken language • more unusual language patterns and features • unfamiliar concepts introduced • closer attention to print is required since illustrations no longer have a direct link to the print • smaller print, more new words • greater range of high-frequency words • full range of punctuation	
G	• sentences are longer with many embedded clauses • large number of decodable words with regular and irregular patterns • story line carried by the text • unfamiliar concepts and ideas are present • variety of print styles and layouts • several episodes with a variety of characters	
H	• books are of a wider variety and include books with literacy or poetic language • vocabulary is more challenging • complex sentences abound • content moves away from familiar experiences • characters tend to learn and change • events require interpretation	end-of-year target for grade 1
I	• longer and more complex than previous levels • multiple episodes • print is smaller and there are many more lines on the page • more challenging vocabulary (multi-syllable words) requires more advanced word-solving skills • illustrations provide little support • texts use a great deal of dialogue	
J	• more difficult and varied books than level I • complex information books • beginning chapter books are included • some full pages of text with no illustrations • language varies from familiar to unfamiliar and/or technical	

Level	Characteristics	Additional Notes
K	• includes longer chapter books, shorter information books with technical language, and literary texts • multiple episodes relating to a single plot; some stories relate to events and circumstances outside of the students' experiences	most reading at this level may be silent, and it will take more than one sitting for some students to complete the text
L	• books area longer and more complex than level K • greater variety of texts and genres • sophisticated plots • abstract themes	end-of-year target for grade 2
M	• variety of formats • wide ranging topics • literary selections with complex language, expanded vocabulary, and few pictures • vocabulary words require use of background knowledge for comprehension	
N	• longer chapter books • include devices such as humour and irony, mystery and suspense • topics go well beyond the student's personal experiences	
O	• include selections from children's literature and chapter books • explore mature and sophisticated themes • many new multi-syllabic words • complex sentences • full range of punctuation	
P	• characteristics of O plus the points below • variety of information texts, including history and biography • may explore issues important to early adolescents	end-of-year target for grade 3

Instructional Reading Level Chart

STAGE	INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL				
	Level	P	1	2	3
Emergent	A				
	B				
	C				
Early	D				
	E				
	F				
	G				
	H				
	I				
	J				
Transitional	K				
	L				
	M				
	N				
	O				
	P				

INSTRUCTIONAL READING LEVEL
Grade primary: A–D
Grade 1: C–J
Grade 2: I–M
Grade 3: L–P
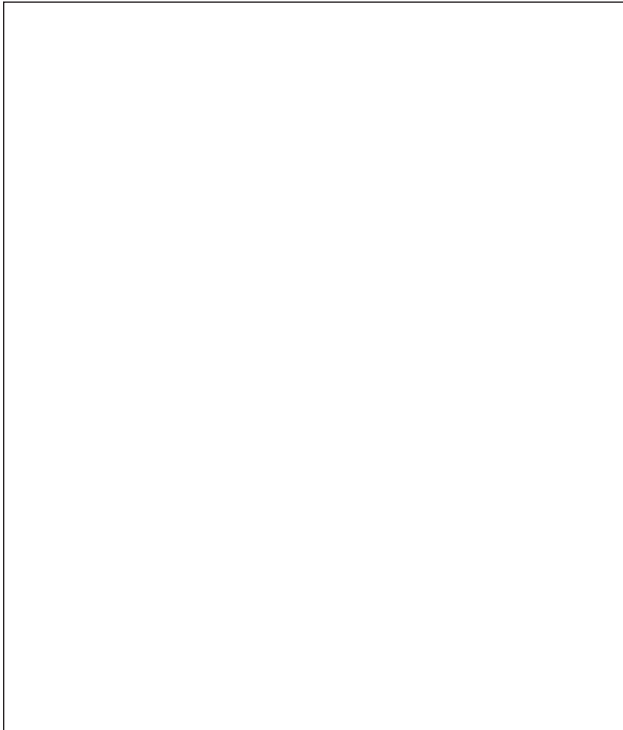
Appendices

Appendix A1: Concept Web
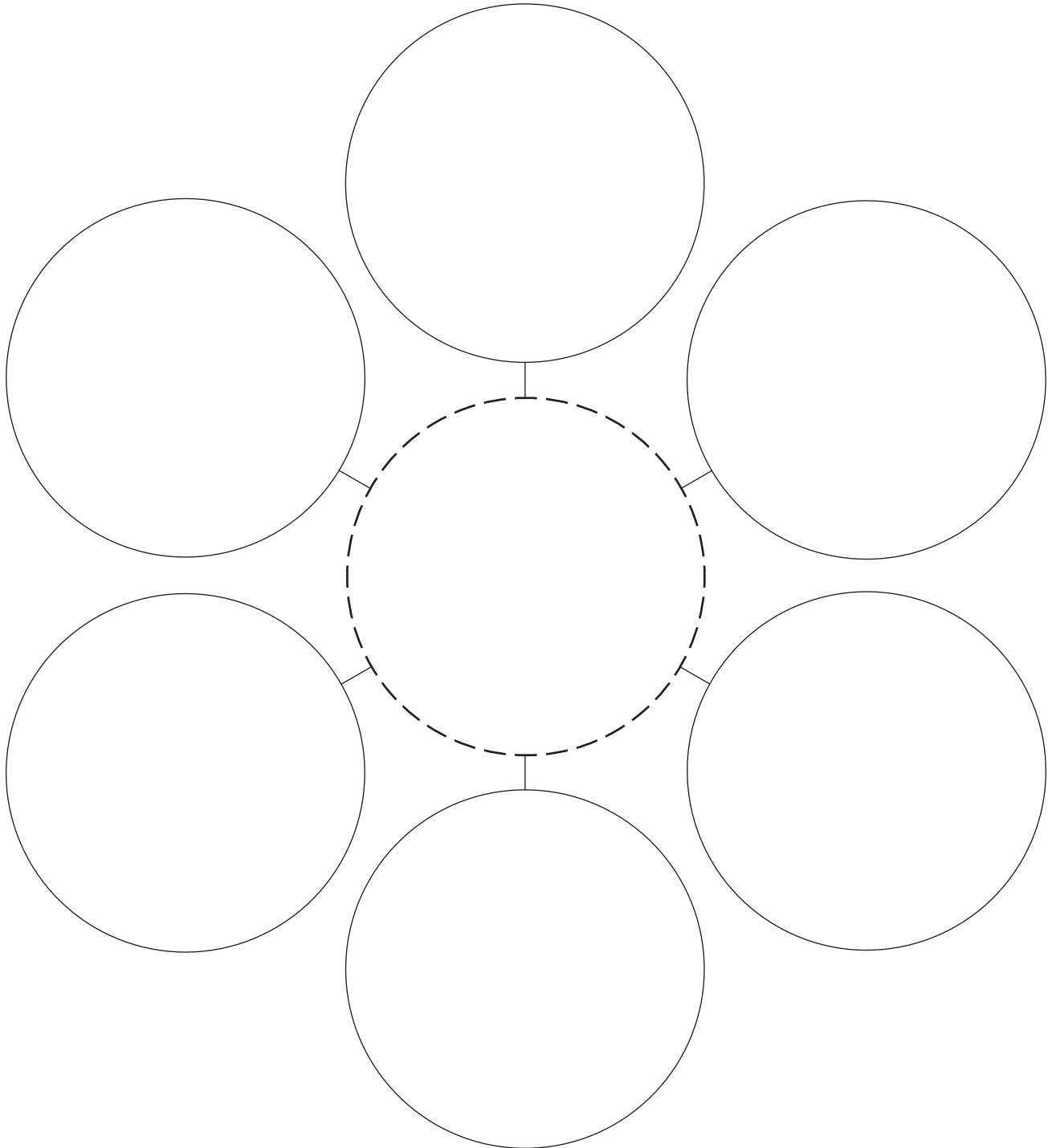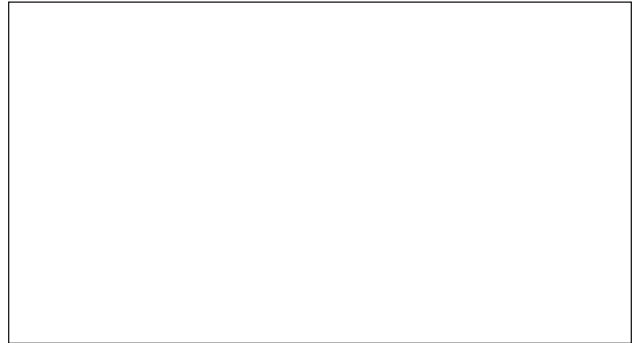
Appendix A2: Ideas/Details Charts
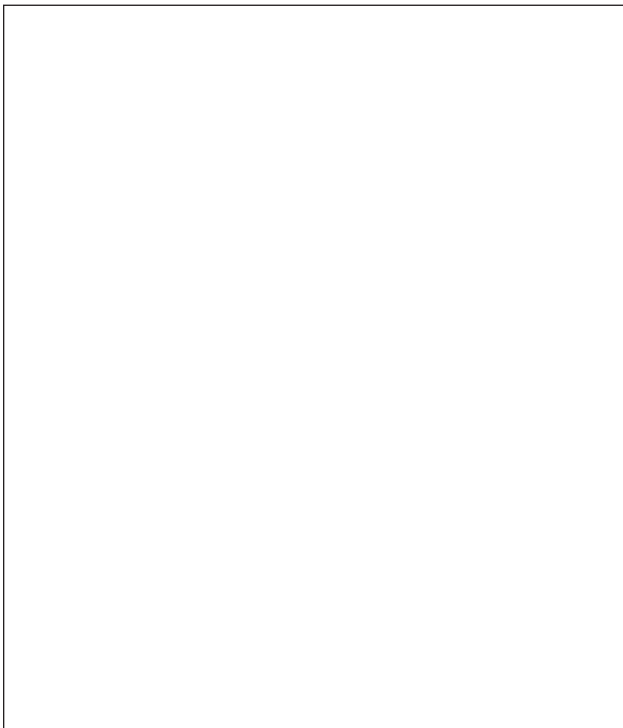
Important Ideas
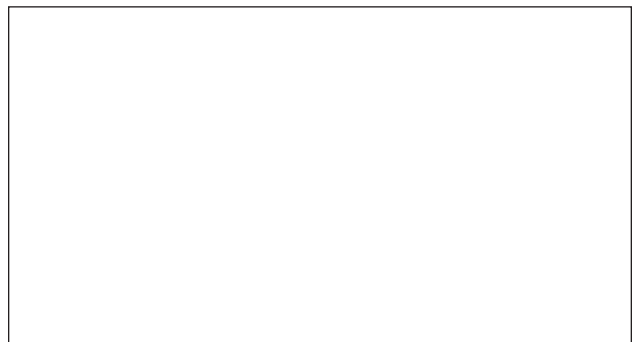
Details

Important Ideas

Details

Appendix A3: K–W–L Charts

What I Know (K)	What I Want to Know (W)	What I Learned (L)

What I Think I Know	
Confirmed	
Misconceptions	
New Information	
Wonderings	

Appendix A4: Venn Diagram
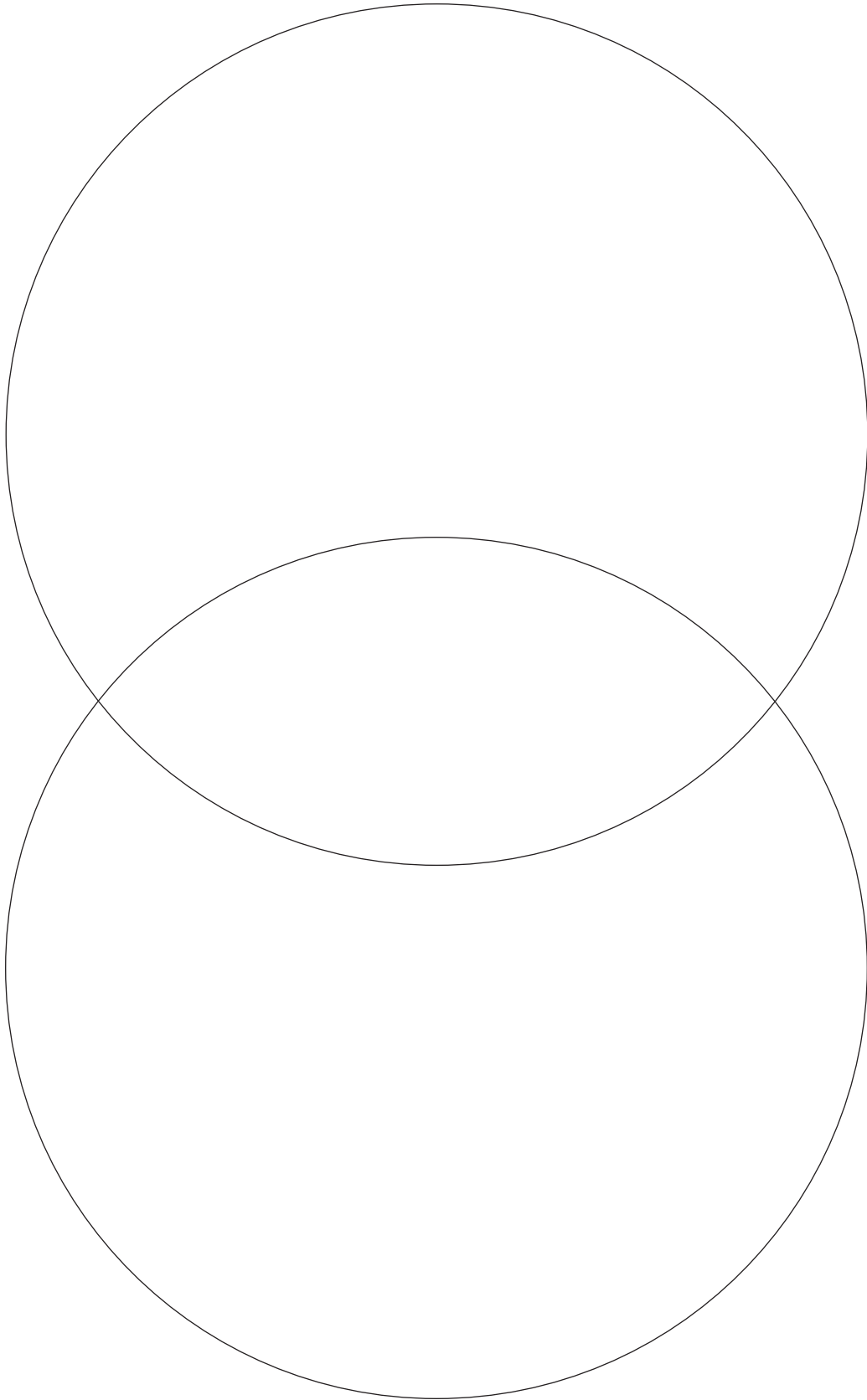
Appendix A5: What I Read / What I Think

What I Read	What I Think

Appendix B1: Concepts about Print (Emergent)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

The student knows	Yes	Not yet	Comments
☐ front of book			
☐ back of book			
☐ that print gives the message			
☐ where text on the page begins			
☐ where text on the page ends			
The student can			
☐ point to title			
☐ finger point as teacher reads text			
☐ identify a word			
☐ identify a letter			
☐ identify a sentence			
☐ identify specific words in text			

Teacher Notes

- Use a book that is unfamiliar to the student.
- Give the book to the student and ask him or her to show you the front, the back.
- Ask the student to look at the front cover and point to the title.
- Open a page of text and ask the student to point to the part where you read the story (does the student point to the print or the picture?)
- On three separate cards, write a short sentence from the text, a word from the sentence, and a letter from a word. Show the three cards and ask the student to indicate which is a word, a letter, a sentence.
- Name a specific word on a page of text and ask the student to find it. (You might also ask, "How did you know that word was _____?")

(Source: *Atlantic Canada Reading Assessment Resource Master 1*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2001, Pearson Education Canada Inc. Adapted with permission from Pearson Canada.)

Appendix B2: Emergent Reading Stage

Name:

Knowledge	Date	Comments
The student knows that		
☐ print is read from top to bottom, left to right		
☐ print contains a constant message		
☐ terminologies such as letter, word, and sentence are used to describe different features		
☐ the title and title page are located at the beginning of a book or selection		
☐ letter and sounds match		
☐ stories have sequence		
☐ print contains information and ideas		
☐ the information and ideas on one page may be continued on the next page		

Skills	Date	Comments
The student		
☐ identifies some high-frequency words (in context) and personally significant words		
☐ points to some known words out of context		
☐ recognizes and names most alphabet letters		
☐ uses terminology such as letter, word, sentence		

	Date	Comments
☐ self-monitors by finger pointing		
☐ connects subject matter to title and illustrations		
☐ matches some spoken words with print		
☐ makes meaning-based predictions		
☐ uses, with support, some initial sounds to predict or confirm unknown words		
☐ uses rhyme to aid prediction		
☐ retells stories and rhymes in sequence		
☐ recalls key information and ideas		
Attitudes and Dispositions	**Date**	**Comments**
The student		
☐ enjoys interactions with print		
☐ chooses to reread favourite texts		
☐ wants to borrow books to take home		
☐ participates confidently in shared/guided reading		
☐ participates enthusiastically in opportunities to retell or act out rhymes and stories		

(Source: *Atlantic Canada Reading Assessment Resource Master 1*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2001, Pearson Education Canada, Inc. Reprinted by permission from Pearson Canada.)

Appendix B3: Early Reading Stage

Name:

Before Reading	Date	Comments
The student		
☐ has prior knowledge based on facts		
☐ has prior knowledge based on experience		
☐ makes connections to other information/experience		
☐ makes predictions that relate to the story or topic		
☐ sets own purposes for reading, e.g., asks questions or makes "I wonder" statements		
During Reading	**Date**	**Comments**
The student		
☐ finger points when reading		
☐ page matches		
☐ voice matches		
☐ uses intonation and expression that indicate comprehension		
☐ makes meaningful miscues		
☐ makes miscues that resemble the text graphically but are not meaningful		
☐ self-corrects miscues so that text makes sense		
☐ does not correct miscues		
☐ uses several strategies with an unfamiliar word		

	Date	Comments
☐ reads on		
☐ guesses what the word might be		
☐ starts again and reads the whole sentence		
☐ uses picture cues		
☐ uses initial letter cues		
☐ asks to be told the word		
☐ can explain strategies used		
After Reading	**Date**	**Comments**
The student		
☐ can point to specific words indicated		
☐ responds to text verbally, in writing, or by drawing		
☐ recalls essential elements of the story/book		
☐ is able to make inferences about the story/book		
Before, During, and After Reading	**Date**	**Comments**
The student		
☐ uses text to support ideas/comments		
☐ is able to state preferences and dislikes		
☐ makes connections with personal experience or other similar stories/information pieces		

Appendix B4: Assessing Reading Behaviours (Transitional)

Name:

Knowledge	Date	Comments
The student knows that		
☐ reading is constructing meaning		
☐ ideas must be chunked and connected		
☐ different genres are read in different ways, for different purposes		
☐ in silent reading, it is not necessary to read every word		
☐ when confronted with a new word, it's best to read on and come back		
☐ rehearsal improves fluency		
Skills	**Date**	**Comments**
The student can		
☐ use a range of strategies to identify words		
☐ integrate the cueing systems		
☐ use cueing systems for appropriate purposes		
☐ use text features to access information		
☐ read with increasing fluency		

	Date	Comments
☐ read with expression		
☐ read longer texts		
☐ read for longer periods		
☐ adjust reading to adapt to different texts (pace, rhythm)		
☐ discuss elements of different literary texts		
☐ recognize characteristics of certain authors and illustrators		
Attitudes and Dispositions	**Date**	**Comments**
The student		
☐ shows preference for silent reading		
☐ demonstrates increased confidence as a reader		
☐ expects to be successful with reading		
☐ enjoys talking about what has been read		
☐ enjoys listening to and reading a variety of genres		
☐ is developing a preference for particular genres and authors		

(Source: *Atlantic Canada Reading Assessment Resource Master 1*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2001, Pearson Education Canada, Inc. Reprinted by permission from Pearson Canada.)
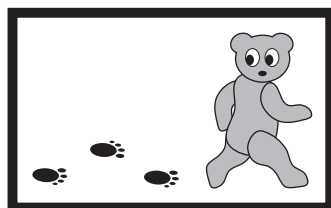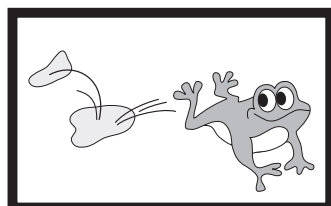
Appendix C1: Bookmark
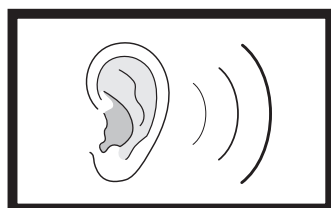
Word–Solving Strategies

If I get stuck …
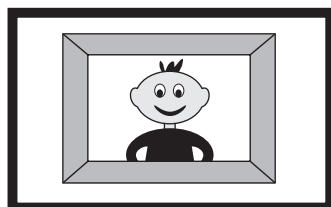
Look at the picture
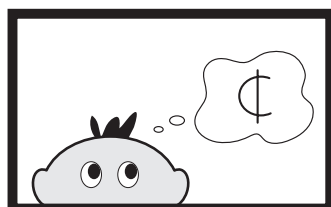
Reread the sentence

Skip the word

Sound out the word

Look for little words in big words

Guess and see if it makes sense

Parent's Prompts
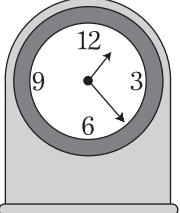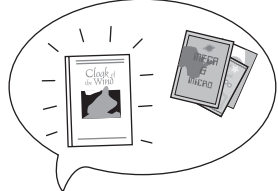
The three key questions to ask when your child makes an error when reading:

• "Does that make sense?"

• "Does that look right?"

• "Does that sound right?"

Appendix C2: I Can ...

Name: _____ Date: _____

I can ...	I can ...	I can ...
choose "just right" books	predict what will happen	ask questions about the book
I can ...	I can ...	I can ...
see a picture in my head when I read	read by myself for minutes or longer	talk with others about my books
I can ...	I can ...	I can ...
I need to work on ...	I need to work on ...	I need to work on ...

Appendix D1: Strategies I Use When I Read

Name: _____ Date: _____

What I Do	How Often		
	Usually	Sometimes	Not Yet
Before I read ...			
I look at the title and pictures and try to predict what the book or story is about.	☐	☐	☐
I make images in my mind.	☐	☐	☐
I think about other selections or movies or TV shows that might be similar.	☐	☐	☐
While I am reading ...			
I try to predict what is going to happen next in the story.	☐	☐	☐
I revise my predictions and ideas about the story as I read more.	☐	☐	☐
I make images in my mind.	☐	☐	☐
I think about why the author might have written it.	☐	☐	☐
I try to put myself right into the story.	☐	☐	☐
I think about how the story is like something I have experienced.	☐	☐	☐
I study the illustrations or photographs.	☐	☐	☐
I go back and reread what I don't understand.	☐	☐	☐
I ask a parent, friend, or teacher for help.	☐	☐	☐
I stop reading if it's too hard or very boring.	☐	☐	☐
After I read ...			
I think about what happened in the story.	☐	☐	☐
I try to figure out what the main idea or message of the story is.	☐	☐	☐
I role-play a character to figure out what he or she is like.	☐	☐	☐
I try retelling the story in my own words.	☐	☐	☐
I draw pictures of my thoughts about the story or a character.	☐	☐	☐
I talk about the story with someone :else who has read it.	☐	☐	☐

(Source: *Atlantic Canada Reading Assessment Resource Master 1*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2001, Pearson Education Canada, Inc. Reprinted by permission from Pearson Canada.)

Appendix D2: Reading Attitude Survey

Name: _____ Date: _____

Circle the number that is closest to your feelings about each statement.

	strongly agree	agree	unsure	disagree	strongly disagree
1. Reading is one of my favourite activities.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It's fun to choose my own books.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I read only when I absolutely have to.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I like reading now more than I did last year.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Reading a good story relaxes me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I read mainly to get information.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I like going to the library.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I'd rather listen to a story than read it myself.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Reading school books is hard.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel good when I read a book I like.	1	2	3	4	5

What do you like to read? (Number in order, with 1 as your favourite.)

_____ novels or chapter books

_____ information books

_____ newspapers

_____ magazines

_____ comic or cartoon books

_____ poems

The book I'm reading right now is _____

My favourite book ever is _____

Scotia

Appendix E: Sample Conferring Records

Sample 1

Reading Conferences for ___Brea___

Date ___April 27/10___ Title ___The Bully.___ _____ Page[s] _____

REVIEW/READ ALOUD/RECORD	INSTRUCTION/INSIGHTS/INTRIGUE	PLAN/PROGRESS/PURPOSE
Retell – character – events. w detail. w/out. ① - ✓✓✓✓✓ ⓟ ✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓✓✓ ② ✓✓✓✓R - look./sc ✓✓✓✓✓ ~~took~~	Rereading to make sure something makes sense ✓ – nice expression - no prompting required parrot ✓ chips / crisps	So what are you thinking about this bk.? goal looking through L→* words . *reading for meaning.

Additional Comment(s): ✓✓ ✓ ✓✓✓

Date ___April 29/10___ Title ___Harry · Willy · Carrothead.___ _____ Page[s] _____

REVIEW/READ ALOUD/RECORD	INSTRUCTION/INSIGHTS/INTRIGUE	PLAN/PROGRESS/PURPOSE
✓✓✓✓✓ were ✓ are ✓✓✓ played /sc ✓✓✓✓ play ✓✓✓✓ Abbott R✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓ ✓✓ ✓✓✓✓✓✓ a this ✓ ✓✓✓✓✓*	Retelling – characters- friendship – sequence likes - ✓ → goes bk into the bk to find examples - ✓ * sc based on meaning	✓ Begin T - flowchart to keep track of story.

Additional Comment(s): ✓✓ ✓✓✓

Sample 2

April 19, 2010   Joshua

Henry & Mudge

- accurate decoding
- stops to talk about understanding
- predicts what will happen next
- reading somewhat choppy/needs
  work on phrasing
△ Modeled & practiced using phrasing

> Growing readers group
> the words together so
> that they sound
> smooth-like you are
> talking.

Sample 3

Name: Claire	Grade: _____

Date	Conference Notes
May 16	Has started to try Beverly Cleary books. Recommended by Robyn. Fluent in parts, needs to continue to need to cross-check and break down tricky words. Solid retell with details. **Our Goal:** Slow down to make sure tricky words match _and_ make sense.
May 26	Requested conference, " I don't understand what this means." Still reading Ramona. Re-taught, modeled, practiced reading w punctuation. Quot. marks confusing—when a character was actually speaking out loud or not.
# whole class mini-lesson.	**Our Goal:** Still make sure words match, but focus on using punctuation like the author wanted to make it make sense.
June 4	Reviewed previous goal. Read to show me how it's going. Much better! Explained quotation marks and showed me examples. **Our Goal:** Finish Book and continue to notice punctuation.
June 23	"Now I want to use all my other strategies to dive in." What strategies? Predicting, inferring. "I'm good at visualizing!" **Our Goal:** To infer from what the characters say and do.

(Source: *Choice Words* by Tony Stead, copyright © 2009, reproduced by permission from Stenhouse Publishers. www.stenhouse.com.)

Sample 4

Gladwin Class List 2010

Reading Conferences - February

Robert	Feb.4, Feb.9, Feb.12, Feb.19, Feb.26
Nicholas C	Feb.4, Feb.9, Feb.15, Feb.18, Feb.19
Olivia	Feb.5, Feb.10, Feb.17, Feb.24
Jenna	Feb.2, Feb.4, Feb.11 Feb.18, Feb.25
Bailey	Feb.5, Feb.9, Feb.15, Feb.19, Feb.26
Faith	Feb.2, Feb.11, Feb.16, Feb.24
McAulay	Feb.1, Feb.15, Feb.17, Feb.22, Feb.25
Cameron	Feb.3, Feb.9, Feb.15, Feb.19, Feb.26
Robyn	Feb.2, Feb.8, Feb.12, Feb.24
Morgan	Feb.1, Feb.5, Feb.10, Feb.18, Feb.26
Sydney	Feb.3, Feb.8, Feb.12, Feb.18, Feb.25
Sarah	Feb.3, Feb.9, Feb.15, Feb.22
Claire	Feb.8, Feb.10, Feb.16, Feb.24
Nicholas R	Feb.1, Feb.15, Feb.16, Feb.22
Ian	Feb.2, Feb.4, Feb.11, Feb.17 Feb.25
Ryan	Feb.1, Feb.10, Feb.16, Feb.24
Kennedy	Feb.3, Feb.8, Feb.12, Feb.22
Madison	Feb.2, Feb.4, Feb.11, Feb.18; Feb.26
Brady	Feb.1, Feb.10, Feb.16, Feb.22, Feb.25
Christian	Feb.3, Feb.8, Feb.12, Feb.19, Feb.26
Dylan	Feb.1, Feb.5, Feb.11, Feb.17, Feb.25

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