

A literature based classroom begins with assessment essay

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



High-quality reading instruction in a literature-based classroom begins with assessment. The need for assessment stems from the fact that children are not all identical. If all children were identical, instruction would be a whole lot easier. We could just figure out what lessons needed to be taught, and teachers could simply deliver the same curriculum to all of the students in the same way. One reading program would work for every child.

Many different types of assessment techniques can be used to measure development in reading to help teachers better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students. Realistically, children arrive in class with extremely diverse levels of understandings and experiences, especially when it comes to reading. Teachers cannot make any assumptions about what the child knows and what the child still needs to learn when it comes to developing literacy skills. To be effective, teachers must be well versed at making a quick assessment of each child's reading and pre-reading skills, furthermore, teachers must be skilled at using that assessment information to make decisions about what instruction each child should receive. Some children may need instruction in letter knowledge, while other children may not. Some children may need phoneme awareness instruction, while others may already have phoneme awareness.

Effective teachers teach children what they are ready to learn, and do not waste time teaching children what they already know. Assessments facilitate teachers in keeping track of the development of each child, so instruction can be designed which neither is too easy or too challenging. Many different types of assessment techniques can be used to measure development in

reading to help teachers better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their students. The type of assessment that informs instruction does not necessarily need to be a formal reading test that was purchased from a publisher, although it certainly can be. Assessment can be a simple observation of a child's behavior when writing; it can be an observation of how well a child plays a word game; it can be an observation of a child's oral reading fluency. Every observation has the potential to be an assessment.

It is a good idea, however, to combine teacher observations with more formal and objective assessment information. The two forms compliment each other, and give the teacher a much clearer picture of each child's literacy-related skills. Reading comprehension assessments are the most common type of published reading test that is available. The most common reading comprehension assessment involves asking a child to read a passage of text that is leveled appropriately for the child, and then asking some explicit, detailed questions about the content of the text. There are some variations on reading comprehension assessments, however. For example, instead of explicit questions about facts directly presented in the text, the child could be asked to answer inferential questions about information which was implied by the text, or the child's comprehension might be tested by his or her ability to retell the story in the child's own words or to summarize the main idea or the moral of the story. In comparison, language (listening) comprehension can be assessed in basically the same way reading comprehension is assessed.

With language comprehension assessment, however, the child should not be expected to read any text. Everything from the instructions to the comprehension questions should be presented verbally to the child. It is also worth noting that a child's listening comprehension level is usually considerably higher than her reading comprehension level. A child that is not able to read and understand a passage of text usually has no difficulty understanding the text if somebody else reads it to them. However, sometimes teachers find that a child who can not read and understand a passage of text also does not understand it when the teacher reads it to the child. It is always worthwhile to compare a child's language comprehension with her reading comprehension to be sure that her ability to understand text is not being limited by her ability to understand language. One form of assessment commonly being used in school districts today is the literacy benchmarking system.

Fountas & Pinnell's benchmark assessment system is one example of this common approach. " Teachers need to listen to students read aloud to make judgments about their progress in reading fluency (Zutell & Rasinski, 1991). Systematic observation helps assess student progress and determine instructional needs.

Teachers observing students' oral reading fluency should consider each critical aspect of fluent reading: word-reading accuracy, and rate" (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen p. 705). This assessment tool helps to determine your students' independent and instructional reading levels, which allows teachers to properly group students for literacy instruction. It enables

teachers to select texts that are appropriate for a student's instructional level, and it provides the teacher with a tool to assess the outcomes of their own instruction. Most importantly this system affords educators the opportunity to identify students who require intervention and extra academic assistance. Finally, when benchmarking is used effectively teachers can document student progress across a school year and across grade levels. In conclusion, it is essential that educator's have effective tools for assessment when developing an appropriate curriculum in a literature based classroom.

Assessments provide the guidelines for the direction of a teacher's instruction. Intensity, skills taught, and reading material should all be based on a strong literature based assessment tools.