

# Descriptions of Early Reading Assessments

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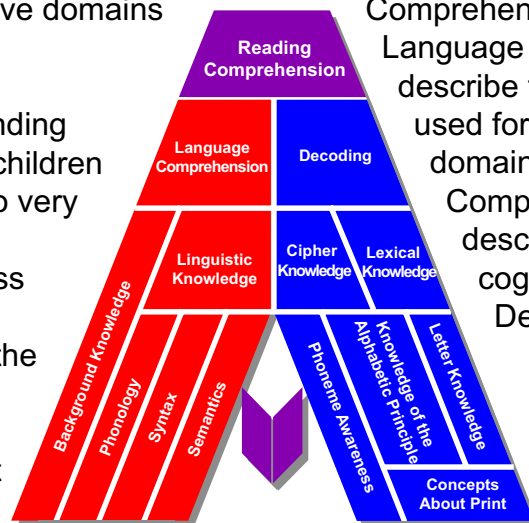
It is important that teachers understand what is involved in learning to read. To help teachers understand the cognitive development that takes place in every emergent reader's head, SEDL has created *The Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read: A Framework* (<http://www.sedl.org/reading>). This framework describes in some detail the various cognitive domains that research has shown to be necessary for reading acquisition, and it also shows how these cognitive domains are interrelated.

In addition to understanding what is important for all children learning to read, it is also very important that teachers understand how to assess individual children's development in each of the cognitive domains described in the framework. Assessment should always inform instruction. Individual children come with such diverse backgrounds and skills that it is necessary to cater their instruction to their individual strengths. Ongoing assessment is necessary to discover each child's individual literacy profile.

To assist teachers in their assessment of the reading development of their students, I will describe common approaches for assessment for each of the cognitive domains outlined in SEDL's framework of reading acquisition (so you may wish to

take some time to familiarize yourself with the framework now). This description of the various assessment techniques can be used to help teachers to design their own classroom assessments, and may help teachers to better understand the district or campus assessments that are already being used with their students.

I will begin with the "top three" elements on the framework, Reading Comprehension, Decoding, and Language Comprehension. Then I will describe the assessments that can be used for the various cognitive domains that underlie Language Comprehension. And last I will describe assessments for the cognitive domains that underlie Decoding.



## Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is composed of two equally important components. decoding, or the ability to translate text into speech, is only part of the process of reading comprehension. The other part is language comprehension, or the ability to understand spoken language. All struggling readers have difficulty with either language comprehension or decoding or both.

Reading comprehension assessments are the most common type of published reading test that is available. And the most typical type of reading comprehension assessment

involves asking a child to read a passage of text that is leveled appropriately for the child's age or grade, and then asking some explicit, detailed questions about the content of the text (often these are called IRIs). 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 her ability to retell the story in the child's own words or to summarize the main idea or the moral of the story. Another common reading comprehension assessment is called a "cloze" task – words are omitted from the passage, and the child is asked to fill in the blanks with appropriate words. Also, young children's reading comprehension can be assessed by asking



them to read and follow simple instructions, such as, "Stand up" or, "Go look out the window."

Reading comprehension should not be confused with reading accuracy, another very common form of reading assessment. In a reading accuracy assessment, a child is asked to read a passage of text clearly, without making any mistakes. The mistakes that the child does make are analyzed to find clues about the child's decoding strategies (not comprehension strategies). Very often, an assessment combines these two different assessments into one assessment – the child reads a passage out loud while the teacher makes note of errors the child makes (sometimes called a "running record"), and then the child is asked some comprehension questions about the passage. However, it is worth noting that a beginning reader's comprehension usually suffers when she is asked to read a passage of text out loud. When children read orally, they usually concentrate on reading accurately, and do not pay as much attention to comprehension of the content. Oral reading accuracy does give insights into decoding skills and strategies, but that is a separate test. A reading comprehension test is most accurate if the child is not reading aloud for an audience.

### **Language Comprehension**

To read and understand text, a child needs to be able to understand language. Before expecting a child to be able to read and understand a story, the question should be asked, "Could the child understand this story if it was read to her?" An essential aspect of language comprehension hinges on the ability to draw inferences and appreciate implications—it is important to understand both the explicit and implicit messages contained in language.

Because comprehension is what is being measured, language 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 leveled, grade-appropriate text usually has no difficulty understanding that same text if somebody else reads it to her. For most young children learning to read, their ability to read and understand text is limited by their decoding skills, not by their comprehension skills. (That is not to say that most children have "good" comprehension skills or that comprehension skills are not a reading teacher's concern. The point here is that even when a child's comprehension skills are poor, their decoding skills are usually worse.) 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.

### **Decoding**

Good readers are able to correctly pronounce familiar words (at the reader's level) whether they be regular or irregular words, and are able to pronounce unfamiliar words in a way consistent with



the conventions of written English. For skilled readers, decoding is so automatic that it requires virtually no conscious effort, so the reader can devote full attention to the task of comprehending the text.

As mentioned earlier, oral reading accuracy (a.k.a. "running record") is one form of decoding assessment, but it is not a very "clean" assessment. Teachers need to be aware that, in their early attempts to acquire reading skills, children apply many different strategies, some of which are hard to detect. Children often attempt to guess words based on the context or on clues provided by pictures – most of the time, a child's guesses are inaccurate, and their difficulties with decoding are revealed, but sometimes the child guesses correctly, making the teacher believe that the child accurately decoded the word. Teachers who use oral reading as a decoding

assessment need to pay careful attention to the child as she reads – teachers should be aware that the child may appear to decode some words because those words are in the child’s sight-vocabulary, and the child may appear to know other words when she is really just guessing.

A cleaner test of decoding skill is to determine the child’s ability to read words out of context. Isolated words are presented to the child one at a time, and the child is asked to say the word aloud (this is not a vocabulary test, so children should not be expected to provide meanings for the word). The words selected for a decoding test should be words that are within the child’s spoken vocabulary, and should contain a mix of phonetically regular and irregular words.

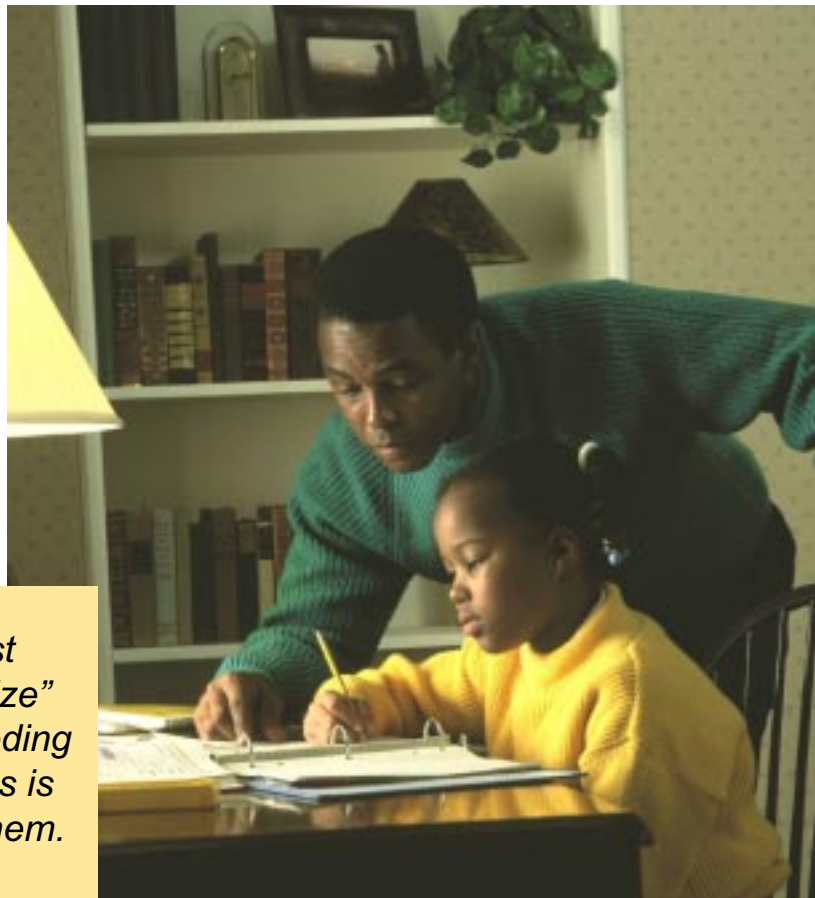
A child can be tested on their accuracy (Is each word pronounced correctly?), their fluency (How much does the child struggle with word naming?), or their “level” – Leveled lists of words are provided by many publishers, and the child can be assessed as to her ability to decode words that are of varying difficulties.

Sometimes teachers test children’s ability to “recognize” sight words as a test of decoding skill, but “recognizing” words is not the same as decoding them. Decoding is a

strategy that readers can use on all words, even words they’ve never seen before. Sight-word reading has to do with memorizing the “image” of a word or a specific feature of a word, and with this strategy, only a select few words are learned. All children go through a stage as they learn to read where they memorize a few sight words, and sometimes they are even encouraged by teachers who use Dolch word lists and frequency indexes to focus the child’s attention on the most useful sight words. However, memorizing sight words does not help a child to learn how to decode words, and testing the child’s knowledge of specific, well-practiced sight words does not provide a measure of her decoding skill.

### **Background Knowledge**

In order to understand language, the child must have some background knowledge to



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use as a reference for interpreting new information. Moreover, if the child is expected to understand something specific, her background knowledge must be relevant to what she is expected to understand.

There are many assessments on the market that measure a child's general knowledge of facts about the world. Usually some estimation is made of what one could reasonably expect children in the first grade to know (e.g. birds build nests in trees, or bicycles have two wheels), and the child is asked to answer these simple "fact" questions (similar to what would be found on the old intelligence tests). However, the most informative assessment is a measure of the child's *relevant* background knowledge, and by "relevant" we mean "related to the task at hand." For example, if a child is expected to listen to and understand the story *Charlotte's Web*, the child should have some background knowledge about farm animals and spiders. Children know a lot of things; children raised in the city, for example, know about public transit, taxis, traffic jams, shopping malls, and sky scrapers. Children raised in other settings know about other things. But any particular child may not know much about a particular topic. It is always worthwhile to assess a child's relevant background knowledge before expecting a child to be able to accomplish a task.

### **Linguistic Knowledge**

Most of the problem of understanding language hinges on the knowledge of the mechanics of that language. All languages have structure, and an implicit knowledge of that structure is essential to comprehension.

Linguistic Knowledge is the synthesis of three more basic cognitive elements —

phonology, semantics, and syntax. Linguistic knowledge is more than the sum of its parts, but it does not lend itself to explicit assessment. A child may have a grasp on the more basic cognitive elements, but still have trouble blending these elements together into a stable linguistic structure. If a child appears to have a grasp of the more basic cognitive elements, but is still having difficulty expressing herself or understanding others, it is likely that the child has not yet managed to synthesize those elements.

### **Phonology**

Speech is the most typical form of language, and in order to understand speech, a child must be able to clearly hear, distinguish, and categorize the phonemes within the speech. A child who is unable to distinguish between similar phonemes may develop difficulties with comprehension. A child who has difficulty with English phonology may not be able to hear the difference between words like THIN and FIN or HERE and HAIR, and those words may confuse the child when they come up in context.

The most common assessment for phonology involves discriminating between two words that sound similar. In this assessment, the child is asked to listen to the teacher say pairs of words and decide if they are the same word repeated twice (which sometimes, they should be), or if they are different words. When pairs of different words are presented, they should only differ by one phoneme (and they should be similar phonemes, such as /sh/ and /s/ or /d/ and /g/). Also, when pairs of different words are presented, the location of the difference within the words should be varied. (Sometimes the difference should be at the beginning, as in RHYME-LIME sometimes in the middle, as in MUD-MADE



and sometimes at the end of the word, as in RIP-RIB) Also, attention should be paid to both vowels and consonants.

In a phonology test, the pairs of words do not have to be real words the child is familiar with. If a teacher wishes to make up a phonology test, she might find it easier to use made-up words. There is some merit to this approach because the child's attention is focused on the words themselves, and not on the meanings of the words.

### **Semantics**

To understand language, a child must understand the meaning of word parts (a.k.a. morphology) and individual words within the language (a.k.a. vocabulary), but more than that, a child must understand that words are arranged in phrases, sentences, and discourse in meaningful ways. The child must understand how to

use language to communicate complete and meaningful ideas.

Semantics is a general term that just refers to "meaning." Vocabulary specifically refers to the meaning of isolated words, and morphology specifically refers to the meaning of word parts, but semantics can generally be applied to the meaning of word parts, whole words, sentences and discourse.

There are several ways to assess semantics at each of these levels, but one common thread involves the question of whether the items on the test are presented in written form. If the child is expected to read the items, the test becomes more of a decoding test than a test of semantics.

Although the items should not involve printed text, it is very common to use pictures in semantics assessments. A child might be asked to provide a name for

pictures as a test of expressive vocabulary, or to match spoken words with pictures as a test of receptive vocabulary. A test of semantics at the larger-than-word level may involve asking a child to arrange a series of pictures to reflect a logical sequence of events.

Another common assessment involves asking a child to provide a word that best matches a definition presented (verbally) by the teacher as a test of expressive vocabulary, or to ask a child to provide a definition to a word as a test of receptive vocabulary. Similarly, a test of vocabulary knowledge could require that the child be familiar with several words in order to answer each item correctly. For example, the child could be asked to select a word which does not belong in a group of words (e.g. THREAD, STRING, ROPE, KNOT). In this sort of assessment, the child must know the meaning of most if not all of the words in each item in order to be successful. Similarly, a child might be asked to provide a synonym or an antonym for words, which is a test of both receptive and expressive vocabulary. Again, in this case, more than one vocabulary word is being tested at a time – the child must know the meaning of the test item, and must know another word which either has the same meaning or an opposite meaning.

Morphology assessments often involve asking a child to describe how a word's meaning changes as parts of the words are changed. For example, a child could be asked to break compound words into their component parts and to describe the

meaning of those component parts (e.g. DAY-BREAK, BASE-BALL, HEAD-ACHE). Or, a child could be asked to describe what happens when affixes are added to words (as in SKIP versus SKIPPED) and to explain those affixes (What do UNWRAP and UNTIE have in common?). Similarly, a child's appreciation of morphology can be assessed by asking the child to describe how words with similar parts are related (e.g. EARACHE, EARRING, EARDRUM).

Semantics assessments at the larger-than-word level usually depend on identifying words or sentences that do not make sense in the context (e.g. "Billy had a dog. He loved his dog. His fish was

orange. His dog could fetch a ball."), or they depend on the child identifying logical inconsistencies (e.g. "Billy's dog could fetch and he could roll over. He was a good dog, but he didn't know any tricks.").

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## **Syntax**

Understanding isolated words is not adequate for the task of understanding language. All languages have rules regarding how words can be combined to form sentences, and an implicit understanding of the rules of sentence structure and phrasing is essential to comprehension.

It is difficult to assess a child's syntactic knowledge without using printed text, but as was the case with semantics, if the child must process text to take the test, then the test becomes more of a decoding skills test than a test of syntax. It is possible to make some estimations about the child's productive syntactic knowledge by listening

to the sentences that the child forms when she is talking.

Further, a child can be asked to identify sentences (spoken) that are syntactically incorrect (e.g. “Jane and her dog the hill they climbed it” or more subtly, “Me and Jane walked up the hill.”), and additionally, the child can be asked to restructure the sentence correctly.

Another common syntax test involves presenting the child with sentences which have one word omitted, and asking the child to suggest

words that could fill the blanks. In this case, the meaning the word is not what is being evaluated, but instead, the child is graded based upon the syntactic appropriateness of the word. So, for example, the child may fill in the sentence, “Mary fell off of the \_\_\_\_” with any of several obviously appropriate words such as “chair” “house” or “wagon,” but credit should be given for any noun that the child supplies (e.g. “leaf” “brain” or “mop”) because they are all syntactically correct.

Another assessment of syntax involves the child’s ability to combine simple sentences into complex sentences, and to add modifiers appropriately. So for example, “Brownies taste good” could be

combined with, “Mary likes to eat brownies” to make the complex sentence, “Mary likes to eat brownies because they taste good.” Similarly, children could be asked to appropriately insert the words, “brown” “big” and “quickly” into the sentence, “The spider ran up the wall” to make a more complex sentence such as “The big, brown spider quickly ran up the wall.”

Similarly, a child’s syntax can be assessed through a test of her ability to change tense and modifiers of sentences. A child could be asked to restructure, “I went to the store” to the future tense.



### **Cipher Knowledge**

The relationship between the way a word is spelled and the way that word is pronounced in English is reasonably predictable. Certain conventions, collectively known as the English cipher, loosely govern English spelling and pronunciation. To be able to decode words, children need an implicit understanding of those conventions.

The best test of the child’s ability to sound out regular words is to ask her to name isolated (out of context) words that are *not* already familiar to the child. Using unfamiliar words insures that the child is deciphering them, and not just recognizing them or guessing based on contextual cues. Some tests simply use real, regular words that are so rare that it is unlikely that the words are familiar to the child (e.g. PUN, MOCK, LOOT), but some



tests use invented or made-up words (called pseudowords) to insure that the child does not have any prior experience with the test items (e.g. PARD, ORT, SERT). Some tests attempt to make the task more authentic by asking the child to read aloud a list of people's names (to pretend they are "calling roll"). The names are spelled phonetically and are not difficult to pronounce (e.g. WANDA BOLTON, WILLIAM BECKER, VICTOR CONRAD).

For young readers who are not quite able to sound out regular words, it is appropriate to test their basic letter-sound knowledge (which is a precursor to regular word reading). Common letter-sound knowledge assessments ask a child to identify a letter that could represent a speech sound (e.g. Identify the letter that makes the /s/ sound.), or ask the child to generate a sound or several sounds that could be represented by a letter (e.g. What sound(s) do(es) the letter "S" make?). In some assessments of letter-sound knowledge, the letters are embedded in the context of words, and the child is asked to identify the first letter (or sometimes the vowel sound) of a spoken word.

### **Lexical knowledge**

Some words can not be easily sounded out because they do not follow the conventional letter-sound relationships – a child who attempts to sound out words like ONE and TWO will not arrive at the correct pronunciation. For these irregular words, the child will need additional information about correct pronunciation.

First a child learns to sound out words; then the child learns that when certain words are sounded out, they do not make sense. As we grow, and as we are exposed to more and more text, we learn new irregular words. As a child, you learned

words like ONE, SHOE, and PEOPLE. As you read more, you learned words like CHOIR, COLONEL and ISLAND. Later still, you learned words like GEYSER, FEIGN, and BUREAU, and if you don't already know them, in the future, you may learn such words as SYNECDOCHE, BAREGE, and CACHET. In short, a person's ability to correctly read irregular words is directly related to their exposure to those words combined with information about the correct pronunciation (It is not uncommon for people to have read a word dozens of times, to know the meaning of that word, but to not know its correct pronunciation.).

Whereas a test of regular word reading (cipher knowledge) is strengthened by using words that the child is not familiar with, any test of irregular word reading (lexical knowledge) should use words that one could reasonably expect the child to be





## Phoneme Awareness

One of the most basic building blocks of speech is the phoneme, and to gain knowledge of the alphabetic principle, a child must be consciously aware that spoken words are comprised of phonemes. Further, that child must be consciously aware of the fact that phonemes can be substituted and rearranged to create different words (e.g. SIGN and NICE both contain the same three phonemes).

Phonological awareness is a general term, and phoneme awareness is a specific term which is covered by the phonological awareness umbrella. As such, there are many tests that can be described as phonological awareness tests, but only a few of those tests are specific enough to also be called phoneme awareness tests.

Specifically, phonological awareness tests are tests which reflect the child's knowledge that words are made up of sounds (linguists call this a "metalinguistic" skill), while phoneme awareness tests are tests which reflect the child's specific knowledge that words are made up of phonemes.

So, to test *phonological* awareness, one could ask the child to rhyme words (expressive) or to pick words that rhyme out of a set (receptive). The child's ability to rhyme reflects an appreciation of the sounds within words, and an implicit understanding that words are made up of sounds.

Similarly, the child's appreciation of alliteration (words that start with the same sound) can be tested. The child's ability to produce words that start with the same sound (e.g. what word starts with the same sound as the word MILK?), or the child's ability to match words based on alliteration (e.g. which words start with the same sound – MAN, MORE, FISH) also reflect the

familiar with. This can be accomplished using leveled word lists, or by using words from previous vocabulary lessons, or by using words from the children's own leveled texts.

Once the words are chosen for an appropriate test of irregular word reading, the test can take one of several formats. The child can be asked to simply read the words aloud, or the child could be asked to find a word from a set that does not belong with the others (e.g. LINT, MINT, PINT). Similarly, the test might ask the student to find a rhyme for each regular word from a set (e.g. find the word that rhymes with CHOIR – CHAIR, CHORE, WIRE). Also, a test of irregular word reading could ask children to match pairs of words that have the same letter sounds (e.g. REIGN, SIGN, MINE).

child's understanding that words are made up of sounds.

Children's awareness of the fact that words are made up of sounds can also be assessed through word length comparisons – a child is (verbally) presented with two words, and is asked to determine which word is longer. This assessment is especially effective for young children if the phonemes of one word are contained within the second word (e.g. KING and KINGDOM or PIE and SPY – note that PIE and SPY have the same number of letters and are therefore equal length when written, but SPY has more phonemes and is therefore longer when spoken.).

Another test of phonological awareness involves the child's ability to break spoken words up into parts – the child would say the word out loud, but would pause after saying each part. This type of task is called a "segmentation" task, and it can be used in a variety of ways. First, a child could be asked to segment compound words into their parts (as in "BASE (\*pause\*) BALL"). Similarly, a child can be asked to segment words into syllables (e.g. "PEN (\*pause\*) CIL"). Also, a child can segment the onset of the word (the sound or sounds before the vowel) and the rest of the word (sometimes called the "rime" – not to be confused with "rhyme"). In an onset-rime segmentation task, the words are almost always monosyllabic, and the child would say each

word with a pause after the onset (e.g. "M (\*pause\*) OON")

The opposite of segmentation is blending, and every test of phonological awareness that involves segmentation can be reversed and used as a blending test. In a blending test, the teacher would say each word with pauses in the appropriate places, and the child would try to figure out what word the teacher is saying. Blending is usually much easier for children than segmentation.

Segmentation and blending techniques can also be used when testing *phoneme* awareness, but in a phoneme awareness task, the pauses would be inserted after each phoneme (either when the teacher segments the word or when the student segments the word). So in a phoneme segmentation task, a pause is inserted after each phoneme (/sat/ ⇒ /s/ /a/ /t/), and in a phoneme blending task, a segmented word is blended together to make a whole word (/s/ /a/ /t/ ⇒ /sat/).



In addition to phoneme segmentation or blending tasks, there are several other phoneme awareness tasks can be used to show that the child is aware of all of the phonemes in spoken words. For example, a child can be asked to count the number of phonemes in a word (e.g. how many phonemes are in the word PIN?), or a child may be asked to delete a phoneme from a word (e.g. What would PIN be if you took out the /p/ sound?), or add a phoneme (Add an /s/ sound to the beginning of



PIN), or substitute a phoneme (replace the /i/ in PIN with an /a/ sound). Also, children can be asked to rearrange the sounds in a word (move the first sound of SIT to the end – note, children who have been taught “Pig Latin” are particularly good at this task.).

Finally, children clearly have phoneme awareness if they are able to identify a phoneme in different words. Children should know that the words SAT and TOP both contain the /t/ sound, and that GAME and PLAY both contain the long /a/ sound.

Some of these phoneme and phonological awareness tasks are harder than others. Blending is easiest, but can be made more difficult if the word, when blended together, does not form a word that the child is familiar with (e.g. SAZ or VIKE). Segmentation is more difficult than blending, and becomes considerably more difficult if the word to be segmented contains consonant clusters

(sometimes called digraphs — e.g. MASK, SPIN or SLIP). Phoneme addition, deletion and manipulation, the most difficult tasks, are also made more difficult by creating words the child is unfamiliar with, and by adding consonant clusters.

### **Alphabetic Principle**

Spoken words are made up of phonemes, and written words are made up of letters. However, knowledge of those two facts is not sufficient for developing good decoding skills. Knowledge of the alphabetic principle refers to an understanding that the letters in written words represent the phonemes in spoken words.

A child’s understanding of the alphabetic principle can be assessed very early, even before the child can read or write simple words. The most direct approach is to ask the child to write words that you dictate – even if the child can not write the words accurately, her understanding of the alphabetic principle is revealed by whether or not she writes one symbol for each sound in the word. Young children often represent a whole word with a single symbol (Sometimes the symbol the child chooses is the first letter of the word, so a child might represent the word DOG with the letter D). This reflects their view that a word only exists as a representation of an object. Children who have an understanding of the alphabetic principle, however, will attempt to encode all of the sounds they hear in the word, although they may not use the right letters – in fact, they may not use letters at all. The child who has internalized the alphabetic principle may write the word BALL with three symbols, and ironically may represent the word BOX with four symbols (e.g. BOKS). Similarly, a child’s knowledge of the alphabetic principle can be tested in other ways. Children can be presented with two

words (written) – one long word and one short word. The teacher asks the child to pick the word they think she is saying (and she would say either a very long word or a very short word; e.g. HIP or HIPPOPOTOMOUS. The words can get closer in length as the child learns the object of the assessment.). Even if the child can not read yet, an understanding of the alphabetic principle will allow her to pick the right word.

### **Letter knowledge**

The letter is the basic unit of reading and writing in English, and familiarity with the letters of the alphabet has consistently been shown to be a strong predictor of future reading success. While not sufficient in itself for reading success, familiarity with the letters of the alphabet is important for developing decoding skills.

Typically, testing a child’s knowledge of the letters of the alphabet involves presenting the child with a page full of letters, and asking the child to name them. The page usually contains upper-case letters and lower-case letters, and a few odd characters like the two versions of the lower case “a” and the lower-case “g.” This is not, however, the only approach to assessing letter knowledge.

Young children who do not know the letter names yet can be given a pile of manipulable letters and numbers and symbols and asked to separate the letters from the numbers and symbols. Similarly, children can be asked to “tell what they know” about each letter – they may not know the name of the letter, but they might know a sound that it represents or a word that starts with that letter. Children that know all the letter names can be further



tested by their ability to separate the letters into upper- and lower-case groups, or to separate them into vowels and consonants.

### Concepts about print

Understanding print involves recognizing and understanding the mechanics of text. A reader must understand that text contains a message; that it flows from left to right and from top to bottom; that individual words on the page correspond to individual spoken words, and so on. Written English has a structure, and understanding that structure is prerequisite to good decoding skills.

Again, a child's writing is a good way to reveal their understanding of the mechanics of text. Even children that are not writing well-formed letters can reveal what they know about print – very young children who have some experience with text “write” starting at the top, left corner of the page,



writing in parallel, horizontal lines from left to right, and from the top of the page to the bottom of the page. The “words” the child forms are separated by spaces, and may even contain letter-like symbols. Sometimes children even insert some attempts at punctuation into their creations.

A teacher can also observe how the child handles a book, and can assess the child's knowledge about how information is presented in the book. A teacher can determine the child's general knowledge of books (Does the child know where the cover is? Does the child hold the book right-side-up? Does the child turn the pages appropriately? Does the child know that the message of the book is contained in the text?), and the teacher can gather knowledge about more specific details (Does the child have one-to-one correspondence between printed words and spoken words? Does the child know what a sentence is and what punctuation is? Can the child identify capital letters and lower-case letters?).

### Summary

As the saying goes, there is more than one way to skin a cat, and as we've seen, a lot of different assessments can be used to measure the same cognitive domains through a wide variety of assessment approaches. Depending on the circumstances, some approaches of assessment can be better than others – some are more appropriate for young children, others more appropriate for older children. Sometimes teachers will find it useful to try several different assessment strategies when examining a child's cognitive development. There are many options for early reading assessment available, and teachers should use their own judgment and discretion when developing an assessment strategy for their students.