



Classroom Assessment

Informal Methods

The classroom assessment strategies demonstrated by Joan Moser relied, in large measure, on her observations and expertise in the development of reading skills. As she conducted the interactive readaloud, she related to her students on a warm personal level, kept them engaged, modeled the use of comprehension strategies and utilized activities to assess the comprehension levels of individual students. By observing how students responded, she could determine how well they were understanding the text.

Assigning Elbow Buddies

Joan assigned each student an elbow buddy to help them periodically check their understanding. This kept all students engaged as Joan scanned the room and noted what the students were discussing.

Encouraging Questioning, Prediction and Transfer

As Joan conducted the interactive readaloud, she encouraged individual students to articulate their questions about the text and predict what would happen next. She also encouraged them to make text-to-text and text-to-self connections, thereby transferring their knowledge to other books or to real life.

By encouraging her students to question, make predictions and transfer their knowledge, she was encouraging them to “think about their thinking” by using metacognitive comprehension strategies. By observing their oral responses, she could gauge how successfully they were applying these strategies.

Giving Neutral Feedback

By responding neutrally to students’ questions and predictions, Joan encouraged students to freely express their ideas without fear of criticism. This made it easier for her to assess their understanding of the story and their skill in applying comprehension strategies.

In addition to these informal techniques, Joan also used the following formal reading assessments to determine the exact functional reading level of her students:

Individualized Reading Inventory (IRI)

(developed by Ekwall and Shanker)

An IRI contains:

- A list of words to help place students in leveled passages
- Four sets of leveled reading passages, each ranging from pre-primer through ninth-grade level

Students read passages while the teacher records responses. The instructor asks comprehension questions and records the student's answers. The IRI text then leads the instructor to utilize the information gathered to obtain independent, instructional, frustrational, and listening reading levels for the student's oral and silent reading.

The information gathered from an IRI allows the instructor to:

- inform their instruction
- form flexible groups
- guide children to choose books at their just-right reading level
- match books with kids for guided reading groups
- inform families
- track growth over time and
- help students set goals.

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)

(developed by Joetta Beaver)

The DRA contains leveled benchmark books for grades K-5. They are leveled at increments that go as small as one month.

Students read the books while the instructor does a running record. The instructor asks a series of questions upon completion, including a retell. The DRA guides the instructor to determine the student's independent, instructional and frustrational reading levels.

The gathered information allows the instructor to:

- determine students' cuing system strengths and weaknesses
- report and track small incremental growth
- match readers to text
- inform classroom instruction
- select appropriate interventions
- inform parents
- document growth and
- set instructional goals.

Word Feature Analysis

(developed by Neva Viise, University of Nevada)

The Word Feature Spelling List is a diagnosis of progressing word knowledge through an assessment of spelling errors.

It contains a list of words from grades 1 to 7, correcting instructions, and precise information about what skills to teach next.

Word Feature allows the instructor to:

- identify word features which students have already mastered and which still need to be taught
- use data to develop flexible skill groups and
- use specific information to inform instruction for the classroom teacher, special education teacher, reading specialist and parents

Running Records

(developed by Marie Clay)

When a teacher keeps a running record, they record a student's responses and behaviors while the student is reading text orally. This is done in order to identify the strategies and sources of information the student is using to construct meaning from text.

The teacher is a neutral observer, using Marie Clay's notes or self-codes to record what the student is reading.

Running records allow the instructor to:

- identify strategies and sources of information the child is using to construct meaning from text
- identify what strategies need to be taught next
- monitor progress, capture reading behavior that can be analyzed and keep a record of change and growth over time
- determine if the level of text difficulty is appropriate
- implement fluid grouping for strategy lessons
- evaluate teaching
- provide information to teachers and parents