Increasing Early Literacy Outcomes Through an Assessment Audit

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Disclosure

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Objectives

1. Understand the value of an assessment audit
2. State the 4 purposes of assessment
3. Identify 5 essential skills to be assessed
4. Know the characteristics of assessments designed for each of the four purposes
5. Begin to identify district gaps where assessment is needed
6. Begin to consider redundancies where more assessment is conducted than necessary

This session is sponsored by Step By Step Learning®.

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Essa support for conducting an audit

Funds from certain ESSA programs may be used by States and districts to conduct assessment audits, improve the quality of assessments, and develop systems to support the use of assessment results to improve teaching and learning. (everystudentssucceedsact.org/)

[Sec. 1202. State Option to Conduct Assessment System Audit, S. 1177–80]

Beginning with FY17 funds, section 1202 of the ESSA provides for state grants, and for states to make sub-grants to districts to:

- conduct state and district audits (that include such things as schedule, purpose, and feedback on the tests from stakeholders);
- develop state plans to improve and streamline the State assessment system, such as:
  - eliminating unnecessary tests
  - disseminating best practices, and
  - supporting district efforts to streamline assessments and regularly review assessments.

Important features of an assessment audit

1. Address the purposes for which the assessment was designed and purpose for which it is used.
2. Examine the use of assessment data to improve and differentiate instruction.
3. Consider whether administrators, teachers, principals, school leaders, parents, and students, if appropriate, find the assessment useful.
4. Eliminate any unnecessary assessments that take time and resources away from instruction.
5. Support the dissemination of best practices to improve teaching and learning.

Assessment audit big idea

Assessment is valuable if we use the data to improve and differentiate instruction and enhance outcomes.

Desirable Goals are:
- Meaningful
- Attainable
- Ambitious

Feedback to teachers & students: Is what we are doing working?

Progress Monitoring and Formative evaluation was the 3rd largest effect on student achievement (Hattie, 2009)

Why assess and monitor progress?

To do something with the information, and use it to adjust instruction to meet individual student needs and improve outcomes.

It’s more than a check off!
Purposes of assessment

Screening
The brief, standardized testing of all students on key skill indicators to identify who is and is not on track to meet future reading outcomes.

Diagnostic
In-depth testing of some students for the purpose of identifying the specific skills to teach.

Progress Monitoring
Frequent, repeated, ongoing measurement of key skill indicators to determine progress toward a future goal/outcome.

Outcome Evaluation
Measurement of achieving the goal or outcome at the end of a unit, semester/trimester or the end of the school year.

Assessment purpose: Student questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment purpose</th>
<th>Student-level questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Which students may need support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>Are we reasonably confident that the identified students need support? What are the student’s skills and needs? What is the plan of support for the student, including goals and plan for progress monitoring?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress monitoring</td>
<td>Is each student making adequate progress? Is the support effective for each individual student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Has the support been effective for individual students? Has the student met his/her goal? Which students may need support?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment purpose: System questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Purpose</th>
<th>System-level questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Are there students who may need support? How many students may need support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>Are we reasonably confident in the accuracy of our data overall? At what grade levels and/or in what areas may support be needed? What are our system-wide goals? What is our system-wide plan for support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress monitoring</td>
<td>Are we making progress toward our system-wide goals? Is our system of support generally effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Have we met our system-wide goal? Is our system of support effective? Are there students who may need support? How many students may need support?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment purpose: System questions (Outcomes-Driven Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Purpose</th>
<th>Outcomes-Driven Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Identify need for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>Validate need for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan and implement support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress monitoring</td>
<td>Evaluate and modify support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Review outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment purpose: System questions (Outcomes-Driven Model)
Outcomes-driven model and assessment purposes

Why we need assessments for all 4 purposes

- Identifying students who need support early, before they have an established difficulty, is critical for early intervention and prevention.
- We can have the greatest impact for the most students when we intervene and provide support early.
- We can prevent over-representation when we differentiate instruction to meet student’s learning needs.
- Students with dyslexia can be identified early with differentiated instruction and progress monitoring.

Critical reading skills for assessment audit

The National Reading Panel has identified 5 essential skills for teaching children to read. Assessment informs instruction in each area.

1. Vocabulary and oral language including listening comprehension.
   A reader can decode a word to speech. If it is in the reader’s oral vocabulary and oral language skills, they will be able to understand it.
   Students with greater vocabulary and oral language have greater success learning to read.

2. Phonemic awareness.
   The understanding that spoken words are made up of a sequences of individual sounds.
   Cat is composed of the sounds: /k/ /a/ /t/.
   Students with phonemic awareness have greater success in learning phonics.

3. Alphabetic principle, basic phonics, and advanced phonics.
   Phonics is the system of letter-sound relationships that is the foundation for decoding words in print.
   Students who understand phonics are better able to read words with accuracy and fluency.
4. **Accuracy and fluency reading connected text.**
   Reading that is accurate (without too many errors) and at a reasonable rate with proper expression. Fluent readers comprehend text better than non-fluent readers.

5. **Reading comprehension.**
   Reading for meaning. “Reading comprehension has come to be the "essence of reading" (Durkin, 1993), essential not only to academic learning in all subject areas but to lifelong learning as well.” (NRP, 2000)

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**Critical reading skills and grade levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and oral language</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic awareness</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>Some students as needed</td>
<td>A few students as needed</td>
<td>A few students as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabetic principle and basic phonics</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>Some students as needed</td>
<td>A few students as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy and fluency with connected text</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Selecting Screening Assessments**

- **Useful** for differentiating and improving instruction to enhance reading outcomes
- Brief and efficient indicators of critical skills.
- **Universal screening for all students** in K-3. Targeted assessment for phonemic awareness and phonics is sufficient for later grades.
- **Standardized**
- **Predictive**
- **Reliable**
- **Valid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary &amp; Oral Lang</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Phonics</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy and Fluency</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Universal screening for phonemic awareness and basic phonics skills

Screening information can be useful for differentiating and improving instruction.

These students need support targeting both phonemic awareness and basic phonics skills.

Screening can inform systems-level decisions about curriculum and instruction.

Selecting diagnostic assessments:
- Use to identify what skills to teach, what instructional goal to select, how much support
- A few students, not universal
- Identify students who have missed foundation skills from earlier grades
- In-depth assessment of specific skills as needed
- More time and resources per student than screening
- Flexible
- Untimed
Acadience Reading Survey: Out of level assessment to identify missed skills/levels

Tiarra, a fourth grade student is developing reading skills at a second grade level and is missing foundation phonics skills.

Target instruction and monitor progress here

Acadience Reading Diagnostic WRD to examine specific skills to target support

In depth assessment of specific skills necessary for adequate word reading and decoding.

Acadience Reading – Pathways of Progressindividual goal setting utility

Pathways of Progress helps us set individual student learning goals that are meaningful, ambitious, and attainable.

Individual-student instructional goal for Ethan

Ethan’s Initial Skills in First Grade

We can set an individual student learning goal for Ethan that is meaningful, ambitious, and attainable.

- 27 PSF
- 17 NWF CLS
- 0 NWF WWR

Ethan’s End of Year Goal:

By the end of the year, Ethan will use basic phonics skills and understanding of the alphabetic principle to identify at least 58 correct letter sounds and read at least 15 whole words in one minute on an Acadience Reading NWF form. Ethan will also read aloud a first-grade Acadience Reading ORF passage at a rate of 52 or more words correct per minute with at least 95% accuracy.
**System-level, school-wide first grade goal**

**Grade Level:** 1  
**Benchmark Period:** ___ BOY ___ MOY ___ EOY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>% At/Above Benchmark</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Early Literacy/Reading Skill</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nonsense Word Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWR Basic Phonics: letter sounds</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oral Reading Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy and fluency</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maze</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*We want to provide support and monitor progress for the 39% of students who have scores below the benchmark on PSF, or at least retest those students at MOY. Our goal is that 100% of the students with scores below the benchmark at BOY will score at/above the benchmark by MOY.*

We set a school-wide phonemic awareness and phonics goal to have at least 85% of our students on track. Are we ambitious enough?

**Use current status and goals to develop a school-wide system of Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>When/How</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A few students</td>
<td>Small, flexible, skill-based groups of 2–3 students</td>
<td>30–45 minutes 3x/week</td>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some students</td>
<td>Small, flexible, skill-based groups of 3–5 students</td>
<td>60–70 minutes flexible, skill-based small groups</td>
<td>Reading Street Read Naturally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>20–30 minutes whole group</td>
<td>90–120 minutes/day</td>
<td>Teachers/TAs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Selecting progress monitoring assessments**

- **Use** progress monitoring and formative assessment to **differentiate** and **improve** instruction to **enhance reading outcomes**
- **Some students** who are receiving supplemental support
- Alternate forms at the same level of difficulty
- Assessment very close to instruction
- Sensitive to small amounts of learning
- Feedback loop about the effectiveness of instruction
- May need out-of-level progress monitoring for students with very low skills

Tabatha is making below typical progress and is unlikely to reach her goal unless we provide more or different support.
System-level progress monitoring toward school-wide goals

In the middle of the year we have 80% of students making adequate progress. We are well on our way to our school-wide goal of 85% for this year.

Selecting outcome assessments

Outcome assessments tell us if we achieved our goals. Proximal and distal provide different information.

- **Universal**, given to all students.
- Reliability and validity are essential

1. **Proximal** outcome measures are close to our teaching.
   - Are our students learning what we are teaching?
   - E.g., Acadience Reading

2. **Distal** outcome measures assess more general outcomes.
   - Are students meeting state or district expectations?
   - E.g., state assessments or ITBS

Student-level outcomes of our instruction

Almost all of the students in my class are on track to meet reading outcomes!
At the end of first grade we have achieved 86% of students making adequate progress. We achieved our school-wide goal of 85% for this year!

Hmmm.... Our strategic support is a target of opportunity. Students who were below benchmark at the middle of year were likely to stay below benchmark.

Identify the assessments in your school or district that are useful for improving and differentiating instruction and increasing outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill &amp; Kindergarten Grade 1 Grade 2 Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary and oral language (&amp; listening comprehension)</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharomic Awareness</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabetic Principle and Phonics</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy and Fluency with Connected Text</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acadience Reading in an assessment audit

Acadience Reading does a lot to meet the needs of an assessment audit
- We need a complementary assessment for screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessment of oral language. Progress monitoring of oral language is a challenge
- Acadience Reading is a proximal outcome measure

Legend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Acadience Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acadience Reading K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acadience Reading Diagnostic PA (Phonemic Awareness) with Acadience Reading Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acadience Reading Diagnostic CFOL (Comprehension Fluency and Oral Lang) with Acadience Reading Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acadience Reading Diagnostic WRD (Word Reading and Decoding) with Acadience Reading Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives

1. Understand the value of an assessment audit
2. State the 4 purposes of assessment
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We need more than a check off

The purpose of an assessment audit is to make sure we have the assessment information to serve four purposes for five critical reading skills for each grade.

Assessment that provides directly usable information that provides a basis for action to differentiate and improve instruction plays a crucial role in improving outcomes for our children.
Reading Is The Point!