Workshop 7
Using Assessment To Guide Instruction

In this session, you will investigate and apply research-based principles of assessment in early literacy.

**Learning Goals**
At the end of this session, you will better understand:

- the relationship between assessment and sound instructional decisions
- the range of assessments used to measure early literacy development
- how to integrate assessment with instruction
- how to assess student work and plan related instruction

**Factors Related to This Session**

- Multiple assessment measures across curriculum
- Teacher-designed assessments
- Ongoing assessments
- Assessment-driven instruction

**Materials Needed for This Session**

**Participants:** Student’s performance sample or assessment records, the Semantic Map you completed for homework (see Session Preparation), and your Handbook for Effective Literacy Practices.

**Facilitator:** Copies for each participant of the Assessment Lecture Poster (page 176).

Assessment is consequential when what you learn from the assessment informs what you’re going to teach.
—Jeanne R. Paratore
Before You Watch

Video Summary

The video for this session examines assessment practices that measure student performance and progress and inform instructional decisions. In her lecture, Dr. Jeanne R. Paratore reviews the principles of classroom-based assessment and engages the workshop participants in a discussion of their own assessment practices. The participants then watch and discuss a set of classroom excerpts illustrating Dr. Paratore’s lecture. In the final activity, workshop participants assess a first-grader’s reading and writing samples.

Session Preparation

To prepare for the workshop session, you will tap your prior knowledge, read two articles on assessment, and review important terms.

1. What do you already know?
Copy and complete the Semantic Map (page 175).

Assignment: Save your Semantic Map to update and revise throughout the session.

2. Read these articles:

These readings are available as downloadable PDF files on the Teaching Reading K–2 Workshop Web site. Go to www.learner.org/channel/workshops/readingk2/.

   FACILITATOR’S NOTE: Be sure that everyone has access to these readings. You may want to have a few copies available for those without Internet access.

3. Review these important terms:
Review the following definitions found in the Glossary in the Appendix: anecdotal record, assessment, evaluation, kidwatching, miscue, miscue analysis, portfolio assessment, rubric, and Running Record.

4. Revise your chart:
Return to your Semantic Map. Add any new thoughts, ideas, or questions based on the readings and review of important terms.
Watch the Video

FACILITATOR'S NOTE: When the workshop session begins, you may want to spend a few minutes reviewing the readings and the Semantic Map to prepare for watching the video.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE: Hand out the Assessment Lecture Poster.

Lecture

Throughout this session, questions are posed to guide you through the topic. If you are working in a group, discuss your responses; if you are working alone, reflect on them in your journal.

In this section, you will watch Dr. Paratore's lecture on using assessment to guide instruction.

As you watch the lecture, use the Assessment Lecture Poster to note important information.

- **Video Segment: Dr. Paratore's Lecture** (approximate times: 2:55–15:08): Find this segment approximately 2 minutes and 55 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 12 1/2 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

  In this video segment, Dr. Paratore presents the principles of effective classroom assessment. The lecture emphasizes the importance of ongoing assessment to plan instruction and to address the needs of all students. The workshop participants develop a semantic map that relates the assessment principles to their own practices.

  An accompanying lecture transcript is also available as a downloadable PDF file on the Teaching Reading K–2 Workshop Web site. Go to www.learner.org/channel/workshops/readingk2/.

After watching the lecture, review your notes and consider these questions:

- What do you want to know about your students' reading and writing?
- How do you obtain and document this information throughout the year?
- How do you use the results of your assessments to plan subsequent instruction?
- What are the difficulties or challenges in assessing during instruction?

Now return to your Semantic Map and add any new ideas that have come from watching the video segment.

Classroom Excerpts

In this section, you will relate Dr. Paratore's lecture and the readings to assessment practices in classroom excerpts.

- **Video Segment: Student Assessment Classroom Excerpts** (approximate times: 15:15–21:35): Find this segment approximately 15 minutes and 15 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 6 1/2 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

Now you will observe teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade as they assess their students' reading. As you watch, note the different instructional contexts and classroom routines that allowed the teachers to assess individual student performance.
After watching the classroom excerpts, consider these questions:

- How did each teacher use classroom routines to assess student performance?
- What did each teacher learn about the student she was assessing?
- How was this information documented?
- How could this information be used to plan instruction?
- How would you apply what you viewed to your own teaching?

Discussion

In this section, you will watch the workshop participants discuss the classroom excerpts.

**Video Segment: Discussion** (approximate times: 21:40–31:28): Find this segment approximately 21 minutes and 40 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 10 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

Following the classroom excerpts, the workshop participants discuss the lessons. Compare your ideas with theirs.

After watching the workshop participants’ discussion, consider these questions:

- Several workshop participants commented on the integration of assessment with daily classroom routines. Which routines were most effective in supporting the assessment practices seen in these classroom excerpts? What other instructional routines would provide time for assessing students’ reading and writing?
- First-grade teacher Robin Peterson and first- and second-grade teacher Marcy Prager commented on how difficult it is to keep other students working independently while they assess an individual child’s reading and writing. Do you agree? What routines or assignments would you put in place to assure an uninterrupted time for individual assessment?
- At the end of the workshop participants’ discussion, second-grade teacher Adrienne Bradshaw asks three important questions: How much do you assess? When do you assess? and When do you find time to assess? How would you respond to these questions based on your own classroom assessment practices?
Watch the Video, cont’d.

More Classroom Excerpts

In this section, you will relate Dr. Paratore’s lecture and the readings to assessment practices in classroom excerpts.

Video Segment: Ms. Perez’s Classroom Assessment (approximate times: 31:35–38:23): Find this segment approximately 31 minutes and 35 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 7 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

Now watch first-grade teacher Hildi Perez as she assesses one student in the beginning of the year and then four months later. She uses both formal and informal assessment practices to learn and document information about this child’s reading. As you watch, note the classroom contexts Ms. Perez uses for her assessments and the information she obtains from each assessment.

After watching the classroom excerpts, consider these questions:

• At the beginning of the school year Ms. Perez stated, “I need to know what skills they bring to the classroom, what they know already, what they still need to learn... So, where do I need to begin with every single child?” What do you want to know about your students when they first come to your classroom? What assessment practices help you to obtain this information?

• What classroom contexts did Ms. Perez use to assess Cassandra’s reading in the beginning of the year? What classroom contexts were used to assess Cassandra’s reading four months later? What were the purposes for her assessment at both times of the year?

• What did you learn about Cassandra’s reading progress from the assessments in the beginning and middle of the year?
  • What instruction would you plan based on the results of these assessments?
  • How else would you assess Cassandra’s literacy development?

Optional Viewing (approximate times: 38:25–46:25): Find this segment approximately 38 minutes and 25 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 8 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

You may want to watch the workshop participants discuss Ms. Perez’s assessment practices.
Extend Your Knowledge

In this section, you will expand your understanding of assessment practices that inform your instruction. You will compare the ideas from the workshop video with passages from various publications. Read and respond to the ideas presented as they relate to your own teaching practices.

Classroom assessment in kindergarten through second grade requires knowledge of what you want to know about your students’ literacy, how you will gain that information, and how to structure classroom routines to maximize time to assess. Assessment in these grades is particularly difficult because of the wide range of student abilities and performance in reading and writing. Read the following passage on a developmental approach to assessment from the article *Effective Practices for Assessing Young Readers* by Paris, Paris, and Carpenter. Consider the ideas for integrating and managing assessment and instruction in your classroom.

Not many parents or teachers expect assessments to be given to kindergarten children, but such assessments can be very useful. Five- and six-year-olds have emerging knowledge about literacy that varies widely among children depending on their home background and experiences. Early assessments can identify children who know the alphabet, who can write their own name, and who have participated in joint storybook reading—all indicators of rich literacy environments during early childhood. Kindergarten teachers may assess these skills through observation or with brief structured tasks. For example, sharing a book with a child can be an occasion to assess a child’s recognition of letters, understanding of print concepts, and ability to retell a sentence or part of the story. For children who cannot identify letters and words, teachers may choose to use wordless picture books to assess knowledge about narratives in connected pictures, a pre-reading skill and a good index of comprehension (Paris & Paris, 2000). Young children’s emerging knowledge about letter-sound relations is revealed in their “invented spelling” and can be assessed by teachers who ask children to listen to a dictated sentence and then write it. Each phoneme that a child hears and represents with a letter is an indication that the child is decoding sounds that correspond to distinct letters. Kindergarten teachers can also listen to children “read” familiar books that have been memorized to assess comprehension, accuracy, and word recognition. This is a natural precursor to assessing how children read unfamiliar words and books.

Some children may begin oral reading in kindergarten, but most begin in first grade. Teachers use informal reading inventories (IRIs) to assess oral reading accuracy with running records or miscue analyses. There are commercial IRIs that provide graded word lists, graded passages or leveled books, and directions for administering and scoring them. Whether teacher-designed or commercial, the IRI is a useful task for assessing children’s oral reading rate, accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and retelling in a 10- to 15-minute session. First- and second-grade teachers weave reading and writing together for both instruction and assessment. For example, they might use a Writers’ Workshop activity for children to draw and write about a recent event. They may use process writing in small groups as a means of assessing children’s revising skills, while simultaneously encouraging children to read and edit each other’s work. Reports, projects, and journals are used frequently in grades 1-3 because children are motivated to write about their own experiences. These work samples, whether assembled in folders, portfolios, or journals, provide excellent assessments of literacy accomplishments that can be shared with children and parents (Paris & Ayres, 1994). Many teachers like to assess children’s attitudes about reading and how often they read on their own, so they may ask children to fill out brief surveys, answer open-ended questions, or keep records of when and what they read. Research has shown that young children often read less than 10 minutes per day outside school, and we know that positive attitudes and literacy habits are the foundation for early reading success (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Some of the most frequent K-2 literacy assessments are shown [on the following page].
Assess a Class

In this section, you will explore an activity to better understand how to assess different centers throughout the classroom.

This activity describes four literacy-related centers in a first-grade classroom. The descriptions include the purpose of the center, materials available, and a specific student activity.

The interactive activity Assess a Class allows you to match a number of useful assessments with the literacy activities practiced in different centers.

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Try It Online! Assess a Class can be explored as an Interactive Activity. Go to the Teaching Reading K–2 Workshop Web site at www.learner.org/channel/workshops/readingk2/.
Assess a Class

Classroom Diagram
Read the descriptions of the centers and assessment tools on the pages 2-4. Then use this classroom diagram to locate the most useful assessment(s) for each center.
**Center Descriptions**
You can assume the activities at each center have been modeled and reviewed with the teacher before students engage in them. The centers also provide activities in literacy development.

**Word Study Center**
The Word Study Center provides practice in working with letters, sounds, and words in both reading and writing activities. Children work in groups of three to four with the individual letters from a longer word, e.g., “restaurant.” Children spell as many words as they know using the letters, and write each new word on a piece of paper. When at least 12 to 15 words are made, children read them and sort them by a specific category listed at the Center (e.g., number of letters in word, same vowel sounds, number of syllables). They then write the sorted words on a teacher-prepared worksheet.

**Library Corner**
The Library Corner is designed to provide children time to practice reading and rereading stories, independently or with a partner. Books are arranged by interests and reading level so that children can easily select them. Children visit the Library Corner in small groups and select books to read. They read pages, chapters, or a complete story, depending on the length of the book. After reading each book, they document their reading by recording the title, author, level of difficulty (easy, hard, just right), and personal response. Children also write favorite books on a chart in the Corner as recommendations to other children.

**Meeting Center**
The teacher and students gather each morning in the Meeting Center to discuss the day’s agenda, review calendar and weather, share recent experiences, and read favorite books and poems together. The Center displays the Morning Message, a monthly calendar, poems on charts, current events articles and other print displays. Children revisit this area in pairs after the morning routine. Using a pointer they “read the room” by reciting poems on charts, rereading the Morning Message, and reviewing the days of the week. They also make sentences with the Word Wall and use the content of the Center to write notes to the teacher and friends.

**Writing Center**
The Writing Center engages children in communicating their ideas, responding to reading, and practicing letters and sounds. Groups of four children work at clustered desks to write their ideas and stories. They create their own books based on a story read during shared reading, and use the predictable pattern and words from the book to create their own story. When finished, they share their stories with the teacher and their peers.
Assessment Tools

1. **Running Record**
   A Running Record is a method of assessing a student’s oral reading behaviors. As the child reads a classroom text, the teacher uses a specific marking system to record known words, miscues, and strategies used to read unfamiliar words.

2. **Interest Inventory**
   An Interest Inventory is a questionnaire that students can complete independently or with the teacher to record interests in and out of school. Teachers can use completed inventories to plan instruction and select materials for reading and writing.

3. **Concepts About Print Assessment**
   Concepts About Print (CAP) assesses what emergent readers understand about how printed language works: book orientation, directionality in reading text, relationships between written and oral language, meaning residing in the print rather than pictures, and print conventions.

4. **Story Retelling Record**
   A Retelling Record assesses a child’s ability to understand and recall basic elements of story structure. The child retells the story after reading it, and the teacher checks elements of setting, character, problem, and solution. The teacher can intervene with prompts if necessary and record the successful interventions.

5. **Writing Process Checklist**
   This checklist evaluates the stages of the writing process children use during Writing Workshop: planning, drafting, revision, and editing. It may be completed by either the teacher or student.

6. **Story Writing Checklist**
   The Story Writing Checklist is used during Writing Workshop or writing time. The teachers use the checklist to track basic story elements – a Beginning-Middle-End structure or a Setting-Problem-Events-Solution structure – in a student’s writing.

7. **Reading log**
   Students maintain individual Reading Logs to record books they read in and/or outside of school. These records often include a section for evaluating the interest and difficulty levels of the text.

8. **Anecdotal Record**
   An Anecdotal Record is a short, written documentation of a student’s performance of a specific task, independently or in a small group. It should only include information that a teacher observes, but may document both academic performance and social interactions.
Assessment Tools

9 High-Frequency Words
This form, which may be published or teacher-made, records a student’s progress in recognizing high-frequency words. It should reflect grade-level skills and classroom curriculum content.

13 Invented Spelling
This form assesses invented spelling, an informal analysis of a student’s ability to use letters and sounds to form words. The teacher records the strategies a student uses to write unfamiliar words.

10 Tracking Print
This form, which may be published or teacher-made, records a student’s progress in tracking print. It should reflect grade-level skills and classroom curriculum content.

11 Letter Identification
This form, which may be published or teacher-made, records a student’s progress in identifying letters. It should reflect grade-level skills and classroom curriculum content.

12 Letter/Sound
This form, which may be published or teacher-made, records a student’s progress in associating letters with sounds. It should reflect grade-level skills and classroom curriculum content.

Sources:

Examine the Topic, cont’d.

After completing the activity, respond to the questions below:

• How did each assessment match the literacy task?
• What other assessments could you use with each literacy task?

Assignment: Submit your written response to the questions.

Wrap Up

Reflect on Your Learning

In this section, you will review and complete your notes on using assessment to guide instruction.

Review the notes you have taken during this session. Return to the Semantic Map you completed in Session Preparation. Add any new ideas and practices for assessing children’s literacy development. Use your revised map and the following questions to reflect on the ideas presented in this session. In a paragraph, respond to the following questions:

• What new assessment practices will you use in your classroom?
• In what ways do you plan to use the results of your assessments?
• What assessment practices do you want to know more about?
• What are the challenges you still face in assessing and recording student achievement and progress in reading and writing?

Assignment: Submit your written reflection.
Choose Activities

In this section, you will apply what you have learned to your own teaching. The three activities are designed to assist you in developing resources for assessing your students’ literacy development. Choose one or more from the list below to practice in your classroom.

Activity 1: Use Assessment To Plan Instruction
Analyze a student's performance records to plan appropriate instruction.

Activity 2: Develop an Assessment Schedule
Plan a schedule for assessing your students’ reading and writing throughout the year.

Activity 3: Create a Handbook
Collect resources for each workshop session in a Handbook for Effective Literacy Practices.

1. Use Assessment To Plan Instruction

In this activity, you will assess the reading and writing performance of one of your students to guide your instruction.

• Copy the Student Assessment Form (page 177). Consider what you want to know about the student’s performance in the different areas of literacy.

• Collect three to five performance samples or records of informal assessments. They should provide evidence of the student’s strengths and needs in the following areas:
  • Concepts About Print
  • Language
  • Word Knowledge
  • Reading Fluency
  • Comprehension
  • Writing
  • Motivation and Interest

• Analyze the assessment samples to determine the student’s strengths and needs, and complete the Student Assessment Form.

Now use the assessment data collected to plan subsequent instruction to support the student’s learning.

• From the assessment information, identify the areas of reading and writing in which the student requires different or additional practice.

• Develop lessons and activities that will advance the student’s learning in these areas.

For example, if the student’s oral reading fluency should be stronger, you might plan activities to develop fluency with simple texts (e.g., repeated readings, reading into a tape recorder, practicing reading to a younger student.)

If the student has difficulty recalling and comprehending elements of stories, you might select texts with a clear story structure (e.g., folk tales), develop lessons that focus on story elements, and provide simple story maps for the child to outline the important information.
Put It Into Practice, cont’d.

To chart the student's progress, repeat similar assessments throughout the year and adjust instruction accordingly. Compare Assessment Forms to consider how the student has progressed.

**Assignment:** Submit a completed Student Assessment Form.

**FACILITATOR’S NOTE:** Show the clip before the end of the session, or loan out the tape for participants to watch.

**Optional Viewing** (approximate times: 46:30–51:28): Find this segment approximately 46 minutes and 30 seconds after the beginning of the video. Watch for about 5 minutes. Use the video image at left to locate where to begin viewing.

You may want to watch the workshop participants analyze samples from a first-grader’s literacy portfolio.

The Running Record and letter to next year’s teacher are available as downloadable PDF files on the Teaching Reading K–2 Workshop Web site. Go to www.learner.org/channel/workshops/readingk2/.

2. Develop an Assessment Schedule

In this activity, you will create a schedule of classroom assessments to use throughout the year.

The workshop participants raised several important questions about classroom assessment including how much to assess, when to assess, and what to assess.

Although assessment occurs daily, it is critical that specific assessments are in place and documented in a systematic way, to provide ongoing information about student performance and growth.

Consider the statement by Dr. Paratore:

> You could learn about children’s literacy behaviors, performance, and interests in almost all areas of the day. What the effective teacher needs to do is develop some framework, some system for collecting and making sense of that data.

This activity will help you develop a framework for assessing and documenting student performance throughout the year—plan to ensure that you are collecting enough evidence for each student. The assessments should reflect your instruction and curriculum goals.

- Create your assessment schedule by listing the months of a school year (September through June). Next to each month, allow space to include areas of literacy and the assessment practices that measure each area.

- In the beginning of the year, you will assess areas of literacy to gather baseline information about your students’ literacy knowledge, and to plan initial instruction. Identify these areas of literacy, and list the assessment practices you will use to measure them.

- During the middle of the year, you will assess areas of literacy to track your students’ progress and continue your instruction accordingly. Identify these areas of literacy, and list the assessment practices you will use to measure them. You may want to include additional assessments for your low-performing students.

- The end of the year assessment will assess student progress over the year, and also provide documentation of performance for the next year’s teacher. Identify the areas of literacy and assessment practices used to measure them.
### Some Areas of Literature and Assessment Practices and Tools

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Word Knowledge</th>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Identifying rhyming words</td>
<td>Oral retellings</td>
<td>Journal entries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td>Running Records</td>
<td>Oral retellings</td>
<td>Journal entries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of high-frequency words</td>
<td>Response to questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>Running Records</td>
<td>Written summaries</td>
<td>Project reports</td>
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<td>IRI</td>
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**Assignment:** Submit your completed Assessment Schedule.

### 3. Create a Handbook

In this ongoing activity, you will collect literacy resources in a Handbook of Effective Literacy Practices (see page 6) to use in your classroom.

Today, you will create a section focused on using assessment in planning instruction. Include resources you already use and plan to use in the future. Place these resources in the section for **Using Assessment To Guide Instruction.** You may want to include:

- the Semantic Map you completed in Session Preparation
- the Assessment Schedule you developed in Activity 2
- a copy of your school/district curriculum learning expectations in reading and writing
- a list of emergent literacy concepts for kindergarten and first grade
- a list of core words to know at your grade level
- a list of phonemic awareness and/or phonics skills for your grade level
- interest inventories
- Record forms for:
  - Running Records
  - oral retellings
  - written summaries
- spelling tests (standardized or teacher-developed)
- benchmark books for assessing at the beginning, middle, and end of the year

**Assignment:** Submit a copy of your completed Handbook at the end of the workshop series. **Idea:** Do this activity with your colleagues to create a comprehensive collection of resources and instructional plans.
Assignments

If you are taking this workshop for credit or professional development, submit the following assignments for session 7: Using Assessment To Guide Instruction.

1. **Session Preparation**
   Complete the Semantic Map.

2. **Assess a Class**
   Complete the activity and respond to the questions that follow.

3. **Reflect on Your Learning**
   Review and complete your notes. Write a final reflection on the session.

4. **Use Assessment To Plan Instruction**
   Analyze several performance samples to identify a student’s strengths and needs.

5. **Develop an Assessment Schedule**
   Plan reading and writing assessments throughout the year to measure a student’s progress.

6. **Create a Handbook**
   Submit a copy of your completed Handbook at the end of the workshop series.

**For Next Session**
Go to session 8: Before You Watch. Review the Video Summary and complete the Session Preparation activities.
Related Resources

**Professional Resources**


**Related Research**


Related Resources, cont’d.

Classroom Excerpts Used in the Video
Classrooms shown in the video session are from Teaching Reading K–2: A Library of Classroom Practices.

- Building Oral Language with Cindy Wilson
- Cassandra Becomes a Fluent Reader with Hildi Perez
- Thalia Learns the Details with Jim St. Clair
- William Finds His Base with Stacey Soto
Instructions: Complete the map by listing the assessments you use to measure the different areas of literacy.

Semantic Map

- Word Knowledge
- Fluency (Reading and Language)
- Language
- Comprehension
- Writing
- General
- Motivation and Interest
**Session 7: Assessment Lecture Poster**

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<th>Assessment That Informs Instruction</th>
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<td>Utilizes multiple measures</td>
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<td>Is embedded in the instructional context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is continuous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is consequential in future learning tasks</td>
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</table>
Instructions: Use several assessment samples to determine the student's strengths and needs in the following areas of literacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Literacy</th>
<th>Assessment Sample</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts About Print</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
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<td>Word Knowledge (Phonemic Awareness and Phonics)</td>
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<td>Reading Fluency</td>
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<td>Writing</td>
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<td>Motivation and Interest</td>
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<td>Instructional Implications</td>
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Notes