

Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Teacher Resources and Guidebook for Levels L-Z+ Reading Level Assessments

Levels L-Z+
Running Records Assessments
Teacher Resources and Guidebook



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Scoring Guide for Reading Assessments

What factors determine the child's independent reading level?

Three factors should be checked when assessing a reader (Allington, 2001):

1. Accuracy and self-corrections
2. Fluency and Expression*
3. Comprehension

*Note that before Level K, fluency is not a factor in determining independent reading level, though it is something to listen for and instruct into.

How accurate does the child's oral reading need to be?

96%-100% -- Independent Reading Level*

90%-95% -- Instructional Level (Books for small group work)

Below 90% --Hard

*Note: For Levels A and B, accuracy is not part of the calculation for independent reading level. Instead, reading behaviors appropriate for those levels are considered.

How do I calculate the child's accuracy rate on a passage?

The child's accuracy rate reflects the percentage of words the child read correctly. This can be calculated using the following formula:

(Number of words – miscues) ÷ number of words = percentage of accuracy

Number of words minus errors divided by number of words equals percentage of accuracy

Example: 120 words – 9 miscues = 111 words correct
 111 words correct / 120 words = 92%

To make scoring easier, we have marked off the first 100 words of each passage to make finding a percentage as easy as counting the miscues. You will just need to count the miscues in the first 100 words of the passage and circle the accuracy rate. If you choose to hear the student read on, you will need to calculate the percentage using the formula above. Do not count the miscues that the child self-corrected.

What is the self-correction ratio?

Self-corrections tell us if a child is monitoring errors and re-sampling text to self-correct errors. (Cunningham, 2004) This is one indication of comprehension and monitoring “book language.” While we have chosen not to include a designated box for recording the self-correction ratio, if you would like to calculate self-correction ratio, use the directions below.

A good self-correction rate is: 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4, 1:5. The ratio 1:3 is read as follows: “The reader corrected one error in every three errors.”

Scoring Guide for Reading Assessments (continued)

How do I calculate the child's self correction ratio?

The child's self correction ratio is simply the ratio of total miscues to self-corrected miscues. This can be calculated using the following formula:

Errors + Self-corrections ÷ Self-corrections = Self-Correction Ratio
(Errors plus self-corrections divided by self-corrections equals Self correction Ratio)

Example: 9 errors + 8 self-corrections ÷ 8 self-corrections = 1:2 Self-Correction Ratio
The ratio is read as follows: "The reader corrected one error in every two errors."

How do I assess the child's fluency and expression?

We have included suggestions for observations and notes regarding fluency alongside the running record. At Levels J and above, we have also included an Oral Reading Fluency Scale, based on the NAEP 2002 Oral Reading Study and Zutell and Rasinski's 1991 publication of a Multidimensional Fluency Scale. The factors incorporated into this rubric include: automaticity (pacing), parsing (reading in chunks), and prosody (reading with inflection). Students must be able to read the text fluently, without long pauses or breaks between words (Rasinski, 2003) See section below on fluency for more detailed information. Note that until Level K, fluency is not required to indicate independence.

How do I assess whether the child could comprehend the passage?

In order to judge comprehension, students are asked to retell the text and then answer several comprehension questions. Students need to give a strong retelling or answer three of the four comprehension questions correctly in order to read independently at that level. *Students may use the text to help them retell and teachers should take note if the student needs this.* Guidelines to assess retelling and examples of acceptable responses are provided on the teacher copies of the assessment forms.

In this assessment we have included four questions for each passage. At levels L-R, there are two literal and two inferential questions. At levels S and above, there is one literal question and there are three inferential questions, as the bulk of the comprehension work at these higher levels is inferential. In all cases, the child must answer at least one inferential question, as readers must be able to make inferences in order to understand their texts.

For levels R-Z+, if teachers prefer for students to write their retell and comprehension responses, they may ask them to do so. In this case, they may give the student the lined response sheets provided at the end of these running records. A teacher may opt to complete all or any part of these sections orally, depending on teacher preference and the needs of the student.

How do I arrive at the final level?

If a student can do the following they can read a text level independently:

- Read a text with 96% accuracy as determined by the running record
- Read with fluency behaviors required at that level as determined by a score of 3 or 4 on the Oral Fluency Scale* (Only considered at levels K and above)
- Read with comprehension as determined by a successful retell and/or acceptable responses to 3 of 4 comprehension questions

Scoring Guide for Reading Assessments (continued)

Assess the child for their highest independent level. Don't stop at the first level at which the child is able to read independently.

Suppose a student reads a level L text independently, meeting all of the criteria above. Try the level M text and if the accuracy rate is 96%, continue and assess the comprehension and the fluency. If the child's comprehension and fluency is in place, move on to the N. If you try the Level N text and the accuracy rate is 95% or lower, or if the comprehension is not sufficient, they will not read independently at level N. In the end, teachers want to find the highest level that a student can read independently. That is, the reader has an accuracy rate of 96% or higher, comprehension (either a strong retelling or at least three correct comprehension questions), and fluency.

How to Administer Levels L-Z Text Assessment

1. ESTIMATE THE CHILD'S READING LEVEL

Estimate the child's independent reading level before beginning the text assessment, so that you do not need to start from the beginning.

Some ways to estimate (you do not need to do all of these):

- Use last year's running records or assessment data and start from there.
- Administer the Spelling Inventory. Use the spelling stage to begin the text assessment at the corresponding reading levels.
- Ask the child to find a book in the classroom library that they feel is "just right" and ask them to read a short passage to you. Count the number of miscues. If it is over five words on a page, the level is most likely too difficult.

2. PREVIEW THE PASSAGE

What to look for: Note that the Teacher Copy and the Student Copy are different. The Teacher Copy is designed to make recording the child's reading, counting the number of words read, and taking notes easier to do. It is not meant for the child to read from. A number of factors on the Teacher Copy make the text more difficult for the child to read from, and would not give an accurate assessment of the child's reading. The child must read from the Student Copy.

The text on the Teacher Copy is marked with a word count of the first 100 words for the teacher's convenience. There is also an area to the left for you check off observations and to make notes regarding the child's fluency, expression and any thing else you might notice as the child reads.

The Student Copy is marked with a line at the end of the sentence containing the first 100 words, so that the child will not have to stop in the middle of a sentence to read silently.

Note that for level R and above there is an option for having the student write his or her retell and responses to the comprehension questions. The forms for written responses are attached to the Teacher Copy of the assessment. **The written responses are optional – any student may complete the responses orally.** Often oral responses are preferable, and if the written responses are insufficient or confusing, the teacher will need to follow up to determine whether the act of writing interfered with the student's ability to demonstrate comprehension.

Preview the passage and comprehension questions on the Teacher Copy before you ask the child to read from the Student Copy. There are samples of responses for each comprehension question embedded into the form. You should preview these as well, to be sure you are familiar with a few acceptable responses to each question. Note that these are not exhaustive lists of acceptable responses – they are just meant to give examples, but many more responses would also be acceptable.

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Why are there two text sets? How can I use the two text sets?*

- You should start with the texts from Set 1.
- If the child has read the text from Set 1 before, you should use the text from Set 2.
- You should start with the child's current independent level, meaning the child may have used Set 1 the last time they were assessed.
- Remember, it is possible that last year's teacher may have used the text from Set 1 to find the child's level the previous year. It is also possible that the text was read aloud to the student or read at home.
- If you are interrupted in the midst of conducting the assessment, you may use the text from Set 2 to start fresh.
- If you find reason to doubt the results of your assessment from the text in Set 1, you may use the text in Set 2 as back up.
- Only use the text from Set 2 if necessary, so that the next time the child is assessed, there will still be a text at the child's independent level that the child has not seen before.

*Note – for the purpose of MoSL administrations in New York City in 2014-2015, only one set of texts, designated “Set 1/MoSL-eligible Texts” is eligible for use as beginning or end-of-year MoSL administration. Set 2 will be available by October 2014 for use in non-MoSL administrations.

3. INTRODUCE THE TEXT

Read the book introduction exactly as it is written in the Teacher Copy of the assessment. Be sure that the student hears and comprehends the entire book introduction. You may read it more than once if necessary, but do not adapt the words.

Example of a book introduction from Level R, Set 1:

Book Introduction: *Say this to the reader before he or she begins the student copy of the text: “In this passage, a girl named Elizabeth and her brother John are being dropped off at a train station by their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Perry. Please read aloud the first section. (Point to the line on the student copy to show the child where the first section ends.) After this part, you may read the rest silently. If you need to, you can reread the first part. When you are finished reading, I will ask you to retell what you have just read.”*

4. RECORD THE CHILD'S MISCUES

Be sure to record a check-mark above each word the child reads correctly.

If the child reads or says something other than what is on the page, it is important to record it just above the word that appears in the text. This is called a miscue. Included in this packet are a set of codes to use for different kinds of miscues (substitutions, repetitions, etc.) As the child reads from the Student Copy of the text, the teacher marks any miscues in the first 100 words by writing every miscue above the text in the Teacher Copy. You can make additional notes during and after the child's reading in the boxed area to the left of the text. After the child has made 5 miscues, know that you will need to try a lower level of text. You may wish to hear the student

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read to the end of the first 100, however, because the miscues the child makes offer valuable clues for targeted instruction.

Example of recording the child's miscues from Level R, Set 1:

Running Record: For the first 100 words, record the reader's miscues (or errors) above the word as he or she reads. Later, you may or may not code them, using miscue analysis (MSV). Stop when the child has made five miscues and go back to the previous level.

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ great/SC ✓ asked ✓ ✓ ✓ pile-ars ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
“Aren't train stations just grand?” she said. “Look at those pillars – I bet they're all of
✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ←_R ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
three feet around. And the windows! Did you ever see anything so very high up?”

5. ASK THE CHILD TO READ THE REST SILENTLY

After the child has read 100 words aloud, you may ask the child to read the rest silently. You also have the option of allowing the child to continue reading aloud for another 100 words to get more information about accuracy and oral reading fluency. As the child reads, you can make notes regarding the child's reading behaviors in the area to the left of the text on the Teacher Copy. (Some teachers start another assessment with a second child while the first child is reading silently. This is a time-saver.)

Note: The teacher copy is marked with word counts, after every 100 words. Please notice that you should wait until the end of a sentence before asking the child to read silently. The Student Copy is marked with a line at the end of the sentence after 100 words.

Example of Teacher Copy with 100 words marked and directions to read silently:

It was Mrs. Perry who remembered there was a train (**100 words**) to catch. “Oh, my! Hurry, you two!” she said to John and Elizabeth.

***** (Reader may read silently from this point on) *****

6. RETELL

When the child is finished reading the passage, the teacher reads the directions from the Retell section of the assessment. The child retells the excerpt (or writes a retell on provided pages at the end of the running record).

Some tips for the Retell section:

- The child may look at the text as a reference while retelling if needed. However, the child should not retell verbatim from the text. If this happens, prompt the child to put it in his/her own words.
- As the child talks about the text, record the child's response carefully. Listen for any parts of the response that answer the Comprehension Questions Section of the assessment. Check off the questions that the child answered through retelling/summary

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and count them as correct in the final score. **You do not need to ask the child any of the Comprehension Questions that he/she already answered while retelling.**

- If the child gives a very brief retelling, you may use prompts such as, “Anything else?” or, “Say more about that,” or even, “Tell me all the big things that happened.” Make a note of any prompts you give.
- Note whether the child’s retelling expressed the main things that happened and gist of the text.
- You are listening for a mostly accurate and logical retelling of the major events in the story. The retell does not have to be well crafted or insightful, but if the retell is mostly inaccurate, or indicates a total lack of cohesion even with prompting (see above), move to a lower level of text as this indicates the student lacks comprehension at this level.

7. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Only if the child’s retelling did not already include the answers to the questions, does the teacher ask the child to answer the questions in the Comprehension Questions Section. However, it is likely that you will need to ask the inferential questions, as the retell prompt is mostly to determine literal comprehension.

If the child’s retelling or summary included the answers to one or more of the Comprehension Questions, mark the question as answered correctly.

The reader must answer at least three of these questions correctly to determine if this is the child’s independent reading level. Try an easier text if the child could not answer at least three of these questions correctly (**including the information from the child’s retelling**).

Example of the Comprehension Questions Section:

Comprehension Questions Section: Analyze the student’s retelling/summary to see if it contains information that answers each question below. If a question was not answered in the retelling, ask it and record the student’s response.

1. *Literal Question:* What are some of the directions Mrs. Perry gives to John?

2. *Literal Question:* What did Elizabeth’s mom say to John that made Elizabeth smile and hold her head up?

3. *Inferential Question:* How do you think Elizabeth will act on the train with her brother?

4. *Inferential Question:* How do you think Elizabeth feels about traveling with only her brother?

OPTIONAL WRITTEN RETELLING AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

As an option, the teacher may give the directions for the written retelling and comprehension questions at levels R or above.

If the child’s written retelling or answers to the comprehension questions are unsatisfactory, then the teacher should ask the child to explain their responses aloud and record the child’s responses on the Teacher Copy. If the child is able to correctly answer the questions aloud, “count” those responses instead.

8. FINAL “SCORE”

Answer the three questions at the end of the assessment. **The text is at the child’s independent level only if the answer is yes to all three “Final Score” questions.** Take into consideration that the text is only one short example of the kind of text the child will encounter at this level. The teacher may decide to use another text for additional assessment (if not using for the purposes of a beginning or end-of-year NYC MoSL administration). If you find it necessary to do multiple running records with the child, you may consider meeting with the child more than once, even several times, rather than conducting them all in one sitting.

It is important to note that you should find the child’s highest independent level. Continue trying more difficult texts until you have found the highest level the child can read independently.

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Example of Final Score Questions (Levels K-Z+):

Final Score

- | | | |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | Was the reader's accuracy rate at least 96%? |
| Yes | No | Did the student read with fluency? (a score of 3 or 4 on the Oral Reading Fluency Scale)* |
| Yes | No | Did the reader demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension through one of the following combinations of retell and responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear, accurate retell that incorporates answers to three out of four comprehension questions. (This may be with or without non-leading prompting. See directions for retell for more about non-leading prompting).• A mostly accurate retell PLUS acceptable responses to three out of four of the comprehension questions (answered or included in the retell). The retell need not be well-crafted or completely comprehensive, but if it indicates mostly inaccurate comprehension, try the next level down. |

Is this the student's independent reading level?

- If you did NOT answer "yes" to all questions in this **Final Score** box, try an easier text. Keep moving to easier texts until you find the level at which you are able to answer "yes" to all questions in the **Final Score** box.
- If you answered "yes" to all questions in this Final Score box, the student is reading independently at this level. However, it is possible that the student may also read independently at a higher level. Keep moving to higher passages until you can no longer answer "yes" to all questions. The highest level for which you can answer "yes" for all questions is the student's independent reading level.

*Note: Oral Reading Fluency is not taken into account until Level K for determining reading level, though it should of course be considered and taught at earlier levels.

Searching for and Using the Sources of Information in Text

Clay (1991, 1993) and Goodman (1970) made us aware that children are provided with multiple sources of information when they read text. Effective reading instruction balances the teaching of letter-sound correspondences and patterns with the teaching of how good readers engage in the reading process. As children encounter new books each day, they need to practice using all available sources of information in an integrated, reciprocal manner: the meaning (semantic), language structure (syntactic), and visual (graphophonic) cue systems. If a child neglects to use or over uses one source of information, the teacher needs to address the integration of the neglected cue system(s) during guided reading instruction. Each of the sources of information, or cueing system, is discussed further below.

What are Meaning Cues?

Meaning cues can come from a variety of sources in the text:

- the illustration,
- the story--plot, characterization, theme, setting, etc.
- the reader's background experience dealing with the subject of the text. The latter source of information is not located in text, but the reader combines background information with that given in the text to make meaning.

Therefore, book introductions must focus on aspects of the story that may not be in the reader's background of experience.

If children are using meaning, their substitution is clarified by the meaning cues available in the story and/or those which are part of their background of experience.

(The following example comes from the Kaeden book, Bandages, page 6.)

Text: On Wednesday the hamster bit Alex's finger.

√ √ √ √ √ √ hand
finger

Analysis:

- In the picture, a furry creature is biting the part of Alex's body where his hand is located.
- But, the substitution of hand is not visually similar to finger. They have no letters/sound relationships in common and "finger" is a longer word.
- It is an acceptable English language structure substitution to say "hand" for "finger." Therefore, this substitution also includes attention to structure cues. The reader is reminded that the use of meaning and structure cues in making substitutions often overlap.

Instruction focused on text understanding (Meaning)

There are a variety of reasons a children may have difficulty gaining meaning from print.

- Readers may be devoting too much attention on visual information (e.g. decoding words), causing the reader to lose the story message.
- Readers may not be able to determine how the story is structured and as a result feels the writing is disorganized and unclear.
- Readers may be having difficulty understanding the story because they cannot make connections between their past experiences and the story concepts. You will hear these children say, "I just don't get it!"

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The list of reasons can go on and on but it is interesting to find that most young readers initially over emphasize meaning. It is only after instruction that teaches them to give up their natural behavior of making meaning (by over emphasizing phonics) that their understanding begins to break down. All teachers must believe and act on the reality that “reading is much more than getting the words right.”

To help students become engaged with the stories they are reading, teachers need to

- model their own enthusiasm and delight about reading.
- make talking about books a regular part of the classroom curriculum.
- allow children to respond to books by acting out stories.
- encourage children to make connections between the story and their personal life.
- ask children compare new books with others they have read.
- provide opportunities for children to learn about authors.
- Conduct discussions about interesting aspects of the book, leading children to notice how authors structure written material.
- expose children to many, many books in various types and genres.
- make books readily available to children for rereading and enjoyment.

During guided reading instruction, a teacher who teaches to have children attend to the meaning cue system will respond with questions that will keep the reader engaged with making meaning such as,

“Does that make sense?”

For example: (See the Kaeden Book, My Doll, page three.) If a child who over relies on decoding words (“sounding out”) reads this page: My doll likes to hold my /h/ /ah/ hat .
hand An appropriate response would be, “ Does that make sense with what you see happening in the picture?” This child also **does not** need to be taught to be better at “sounding out.” After he notices his lack of use of meaning, the teacher who wants to teach to the visual cue system should encourage him to see the known word in “hand.” Adding the beginning /h/ sound to “and” would teach the child to cross-check the visual and meaning cue systems.

“What do you think the character feels like now?... Why”

For example: (See the back of the Kaeden Book Card for Nana’s Orchard.) Notice the questions and discussion items suggested that encourage readers to respond to the boy’s feelings during parts of the story; the adults feelings during parts of the story.

“How do you think the characters will solve the problem?”

For example: (See the back of the Kaeden Book Card for Bandages.) Notice how the reader is encouraged to make predictions about how the main character will solve his problem of falling and needing a bandage, before they read the second part of the book which tells what he did.

Little books used with Role Play and Experimental Readers allow minimal opportunity for a child to become deeply or aesthetically engaged with a story. These books are written in patterned, predictable format to assist these children in mastering early concepts about print such as directional movement, one to one matching, using meaning cues in the picture, the difference between letters and words, and beginning use of visual (graphophonic) cues in text.

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As stories become more complex, however, children need to learn about story conventions and the way author's craft stories or they will have a great deal of difficulty eliciting meaning, making personal responses and may never develop the love of reading.

What are structure (syntactic) cues?

(Oral language vs. book language.)

Structure cues are determined by the word order or "syntax" of the words in a sentence. From about the age of five, all children have an understanding of the syntax of their native language. Therefore, the child using structure cues would ask, "Does it make sense to say it that way? or "Would it sound right to say it that way?"

One must remember, however, that the language structures used in text often differ from the children's understanding of their native language. This is why it is important to rehearse unusual language structures in text with children during a book introduction.

Children should evaluate their predictions of the text in the story *up to and including the substitution or predicted word in question*. Does their word make an acceptable language construction. If a predicted word does not make sense in the order of the printed words in the sentence up to that point, they should monitor the discrepancy, and go back to make a self correction.

(The following example comes from the Kaeden book, My Tiger Cat, page 5.)

Text: when she tries to catch a mouse.

Reader	√	√	<u>goes</u>	√	√	√	√
Response:			tries				

Analysis:

- "when she goes. . . ." This substitution is a good English language construction. Since analysis takes place up to and including the error, it does sound right to say, "when she goes. . ."
- But, the substitution does not match the visual (graphophonic) cues in tries.
- In this case, it even has meaning to say, "when she goes to catch a mouse." Because meaning and structure cues overlap so much it is very difficult to find a substitution that is due to structure only.

Instruction focused on language structure (syntax):

In the process of enjoying literature children begin to sort out how the language of books compares and contrasts with their own language. This can only occur when children read authentic books with sentence patterns that model natural language. These books must also contain content that approximates the reality of life in the children's world. When children read these kinds of books while they experiment with writing their own stories, their attention is drawn to the details of how written language is constructed.

Highly supportive early books incorporate vocabulary and language patterns that are within a child's natural oral language. Because young readers' thinking and communicating is primarily regulated by their oral language patterns, they may have difficulty making sense out of complex or unusual sentence structures that sound unfamiliar.

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For example: (See the Kaeden Book Grocery Shopping, page 4.) The sentence patterns “I’ll get the milk.” or “Let’s get some bananas.” are unnatural for most beginning readers. They look at the picture and want to say, “I will get milk.” “I will get a banana.” Therefore, children must be allowed to hear and say these unusual language patterns during the book introduction.

As children gain more control over reading, later books begin a gradual transition from the more familiar patterns of oral language to the less familiar and less predictable writing patterns. By this time children have usually had more experiences in hearing and reading stories and realize that literary language (e.g. dialogue) has unique characteristics that are different from oral language.

For example: (See the Kaeden Book, Carla’s Breakfast, page 7.) Although some children find it more natural (but less polite) to say “Can I have the cereal. . .”, [text reads – May I have the cereal?] children who are ready to read this book have enough word recognition skills that they can crosscheck with visual to read the language structure that is different from that which they will normally say.

By noticing unusual phrasing, by rereading interesting sentences and by discussing the language patterns found in books, teachers help students appreciate and understand how language can be constructed. One of the signs that a child is beginning to recognize language structure is when a teacher sees book refrains being dropped into students’ writing!

During guided reading ask questions such as:

“What would you say if you were the character?”

For example: (See the Kaeden Book, Shopping at the Mall, page 16.) Reminding children of all the shopping the mother and daughter did at the mall would help them to predict that the young girl is complaining that she is “tired.”

“What is a word that would fit there?”

For example: (See the Kaeden Book, My Tiger Cat, page 3.) Children often find the words “when” or “then” difficult. If they do, teach to language structure rather than just “visual/graphophonic” means of learning these words. Lead the child to see that the way the author tells the story, My Tiger Cat, is to tell what the cat thinks she is “when” she does something.

Other stories use “then” as a conclusion to a series of events that make the story. (See the Kaeden Book, To the Beach.) Remind the child that the character(s) did this, and this, and this, “then. . .” (Note: It is also valuable to provide many opportunities for the child to (1) write these words, (2) make them with magnetic letters, (3) help you write them during interactive or shared writing. But, this working with words in isolation must be accompanied by allowing the child to read the words in the context of a story.

“Did you notice how the people in this story used unusual expressions?...How is this different from the way you talk?”

For example: (See the Kaeden Book, The Friendly Alligator.) Use this question with the animals’ refrain, “Oh me, oh my, oh no.”

“Read that again and make it sound like talking.”

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What are visual (graphophonic) cues?

Visual cues are one source of information the reader uses in the printed material on the page that allows the child to interpret the author's story. Visual cues are the spaces between words, the letters (upper and lower case forms), size of the print, punctuation marks, and the way the print is placed on the page.

Visual cues *are not* cues the child gains by looking at the picture. Information contained in illustrations are meaning cues. Some reading specialists call visual cues graphophonic cues, referring only to letter/sound relationships. The concept of visual cues is more inclusive adding spacing, size of print, punctuation marks, formatting of text on page (and other concepts of print) to letter/sound relationships. In the Kaeden Book cards that follow, we attempt to be consistent in referring to these as print/letter/sound cues as visual cues.

To determine if a reader was attending to visual cues, the teacher would analyze a the substitution to determine if it looks like the printed text.

(The following example comes from the Kaden book, The Clown, page 5.)

TEXT: Put on your hair.
Reader's
Response: √ √ √ her
hair

Analysis:

- The substitution of "her" for "hair" looks similar. The child appears to be using the first letter of the word, and possibly the last letter.
- The substitution does not make use of meaning cues from the story or picture (i.e. The new thing added to the clown's costume is hair).
- The substitution does not make sense.

Instruction focused on visual (phonics/letter-sound patterns):

One of the most important roles of a teacher of early reading is to flood children with experiences with print. Just as children need to hear spoken language in a context to give it meaning, they need to see letters and words in a context to make sense of the patterns and letter-sound relationships. New readers often “read” beginning level books by memorizing. This experience will support the development of phonemic awareness, because it enables children to learn about letter-sounds using words that are already familiar.

For example: One of the authors observed a child having difficulty recognizing the word “to” in isolation when asked to do so by her teacher. The teacher took her back to a book she was reading from “memory,” and placed the magnetic letters for the word “to” beside the book. The child used one-to-one matching in the text to find the word that looked like the magnetic letters, and said, “It’s ‘to!’” The teacher then had her make and break the word noticing the beginning sound of /t/ in the word “to” the child constructed the word. Other children have been observed reading words in familiar text using picture clues or memory for text. When asked, “How did you know the word was ____?” Children give their problem-solving strategy, often stating that the word “Gotsa __ letter at the front,” making a new discovery that the word they are naming in the picture begins with a letter sound relationship they know. The point being made here is that children who have very meager letter/sound and word knowledge need to start reading somewhere. As they accumulate more and more information about print, they are taken into higher level books where they are no longer able to “memorize” the stories. Pattern and predictable stories are only the beginning point in the journey to reading independence.

Children’s understanding of phonics as a tool for problem solving will be far more powerful if instruction encourages them to make links among word patterns they encounter during reading and writing rather than having them memorize a list of rules. Teachers can emphasize common

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letter-sound patterns in words by using magnetic letters and white boards to study and manipulate the pattern.

For example: Numerous suggestions are given on the Kaeden Book Cards (side 1 and 2) that make teachers aware of opportunities to teach for word analysis during the guided reading lesson. Again, teachers are cautioned that they should teach to only those suggestions for which the child is ready and those suggested word analysis procedures which they need.

By bringing the suggested word analysis pattern back to and from words in the story, children begin to understand how familiar patterns in unfamiliar words can assist them with their reading.

Directly teaching letter-sound relationships and patterns through writing is especially effective. As children (1) slowly voice words and (2) try to draw from their visual memories what the word looked like in print, and (3) as they attach letters to the sounds they are saying as they slowly verbalize the word they are trying to write, they begin to develop phonemic awareness. Writing attempts also demonstrate children's growth in and development of phonemic awareness to the teacher. Many times the teacher can use "shared" or "interactive" writing of a story on a chart as a means of introducing one of the Kaeden Books before Guided Reading.

Questions to ask which direct children's attention to visual information include:

- "What does it [an unknown word] look like?"
- "Do you know any other words that end with those letters?"
- "What letter would you expect to see at the beginning of the word?"

Beyond letters and words, the visual layout of a book will affect how easy or hard it may be for an early reader. The amount of text on a page, for example, can be important. An early reader can become confused or distracted by more than one line of print on a page when he or she is just learning how to match an oral response to a written response.

Prompts which encourage students to use one-to-one matching are:

- "Where do you start reading?"
- "Which way do you go?"
- "Show me a letter. Show me a word. Show me a space between words."
- "Read it with your finger."
- "Did that match?"
- "Were there enough words?"
- "Hold your finger on each word until you say the WHOLE word." (Note: Some children point to a new word for each pronounced syllable of a polysyllabic word.)
- "When you come to the end of this line where do you go next?"

The amount of spacing between words and size, font and where the print is located can also influence a child's success with the reading task.

- "When you read books like this one, you must start at the top of each page and 'scan' down making sure you read all the words."

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Instruction focused on teaching self-monitoring, cross-checking, and self-correcting using integration of all sources of information

Clay (1993) states that independent readers possess a self-extending system characterized by the following:

- The reader has early strategies (directional movement, one-to-one matching, locating known and unknown words) secure and habituated, freeing him to attend to other things.
- The reader monitors his own reading and writing.
- The reader searches for cues in word sequences, in meaning, in letter sequences.
- The reader discovers new things for himself.
- The reader cross-checks one source of cues with another.
- The reader repeats as if to confirm his reading or writing so far.
- The reader self-corrects taking the initiative for making cues match, or getting words right.
- The reader solves new words by these means (p. 43).

In order to assure that this self-extending system develops, teachers must “teach for” problem-solving strategies based upon the integration of all sources of information. They must also teach in a way that they facilitate independence in children to monitor and cross check the sources of information described above alone.

To do this teachers cannot locate errors for the child, whisper helpful hints in the readers ear, or point to sources of information in words, pictures, or the story for the child.

- Take the opportunity to celebrate the tentativeness of a child noticing something is not quite right even if they do not self-correct an error in one to one matching or using letter/sound cues with the meaning and structure of the story.
- Always praise attempts at self-correction, noticing that the child did demonstrate self-monitoring behavior.

For example:

When a child, reading the Kaeden Book Looking for Halloween, tries to turn page 3 to find the other part of the word spider (because he or she attempts to point to a new word for each part of spi-der) in the following sentence:

I can find a spider.

Perhaps the child notices that something is not quite right, hesitates, and then goes on to read the next page, never holding his finger on the whole word spider until he or she says all of it (i.e. never getting the word exactly correct). Celebrate and praise that the child noticed that something was not quite right. Then, teach explicitly for one-to-one matching of polysyllabic words using examples and modeling.

Readers must notice mismatches in sources of information by self-monitoring what they read, and, in turn, cross-check all sources of information to facilitate getting the author’s message.

Some things the teacher would say to make this happen are as follows:

- “How do you know you were right?”
- “Can it be ____?”
- “Can you find the tricky part?”
- “Take a closer look at ____.”
- “What did you notice?”
- “Why did you stop reading?”
- “How else could you be sure that was ____?”
- “It sounds right to say ____, but let’s look again at that word what do you notice?”
- “How did you know that was ____?”

Reading Fluency: Pace, Parsing, and Prosody

FLUENT READERS:

- Focus their attention on making connections among ideas in the text and their background knowledge
- Recognize words and comprehend at the same time
- Divide words into meaningful chunks so that they are able to read with expression.
- Score higher on comprehension assessments

NON-FLUENT READERS:

- Focus their attention primarily on decoding individual sounds or words
- Spend their energies trying to “figure out” the words not the meaning
- Read in a slow, deliberate, and labored manner often pausing at inappropriate places
- Score lower on comprehension assessments
- Fluency and automaticity are often interchanged, however they are not the same thing.

Fluency means reading with accuracy, pacing (automaticity), and expression (prosody). *"The fluent reader sounds good, is easy to listen to, and reads with enough expression to help the listener understand and enjoy the material."* (Clark, Read All About It, p. 282)

Automaticity is the fast, effortless recognition of words that comes with a great deal of reading practice. *"As a result of extended practice, an important change takes place: students learn to decode the printed words using significantly less attention. Because they require so little attention for word recognition, they have enough left over for comprehension."* (Samuels, Schermer, Reinking, Read All About It, p. 269)

Parsing: To parse text means to break it up into smaller parts, or breaking up ordinary text. Parsing involves reading phrases and/or clauses by dividing the text into chunks. Reading phrase units rather than conventional text does seem to result in improved fluency (Kuhn and Stahl, 2000).

Prosody is the ability to read in a manner that sounds like normal speech. Voice intonation and expression needs to mirror normal speech. In addition, prosody is the ability to read a text orally using appropriate pitch, stress, and juncture, and to project the natural intonation and phrasing of the spoken word upon the written text. Prosodic cues are the structure of the text and language, which help students identify the appropriate pitch, stress, and juncture to be assigned to a given text.

Moving Students to a New Independent Reading Level

When a child achieves above 96% accuracy with adequate fluency and comprehension on this assessment, this is one indicator that students are able to read independently at this level. It is recommended, however, that scaffolds be put in place to support the student in strengthening the behaviors and comprehension work required at this level. It is also possible that students who are approaching independence at a higher level may be introduced to some of the comprehension work required for that level through conferring and small group work, even before they have “tested” into that level. Guided reading is not the only or even the wisest option for transitioning students once they have reached higher levels (i.e. R, S, T). Strategy lessons can be used, but we also want to set children up to become independent in approaching more difficult text.

Several suggestions are listed below to help with transitioning students into a new reading level.

1. Read books at the new level with a partner already at that level.
2. Teachers should consider the expectations they have for children in the new level (e.g. initially, back off from expecting higher level comprehension than the student was able to achieve at the previous level).
3. Confer with the student about how they are handling the new level. This can provide information for teaching during the conference, or designing strategy lessons for the student and others like him or her.
4. Use “transitional baggies” which include a few unread books from the previous level with books from the new level.
5. Since a higher load of unknown vocabulary words is possible at the new level, make sure that extra instruction is provided in how to determine the meaning of an unknown word from the mood or the flow of the story as well as using the context of the sentence in which the word appears.
6. Provide a scaffolding book introduction that introduces children to the characters, important vocabulary and gist of the story when the child is new to the level.