

Section X

Known Words

Rationale

This assessment helps teachers understand specifically what individual children know about known words in order to establish instructional priorities for each child in the early stages of literacy development.

Writing known words is a factor in effectively relating the meaning of a text. The ability to quickly remember and write words easily and automatically enables more effective communication. This assessment is most useful when a child is reading and writing at the emergent stage. Little information is gained by the teacher after a child can write approximately 50 different words within the ten minute time limit. **Teachers' observations are crucial and critical factors informing their decisions about whom and when to assess.**

Definition

Students need to be able to write words that occur frequently in their reading and writing. This is part of a developmental process in which students learn how to remember and generate whole written words.

Assessment Guidelines

Materials

1. Provide each child with paper and a writing instrument.

Procedure

1. Children may be assessed:
 - Individually or in a small group. The teacher should monitor students closely to prevent copying from environment or each other.
 - In a large group. The teacher needs to take students to a gym, cafeteria, or hallway providing adequate space and little environmental print.
2. Say to the child: **Let's see how many words you can write.**

Note: You may prompt the child using the following questions. Use as many or all of the suggested prompts, as necessary, if the child stops writing and has not reached the time limit.

Many of the materials included in the *Michigan Literacy Progress Profile* were adapted from *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* by Marie M. Clay and published by Heinemann. For a more complete discussion of the types of assessments included in this profile and their interpretations, please consult *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*.

Prompts

- **Write your name.**
 - **Write the names of people in your family.**
 - **Write the names of some numbers.**
 - **Write the names of some animals.**
 - **Write the names of some colors.**
 - **Are there any other words you can write?**
 - **Are there any other small words you know, such as I, me, mom, to, the, and, in, do, go, no, my, etc.?**
3. Continue until the child has written all the words s/he knows. Do not exceed ten minutes.
 4. One point is given for each word spelled correctly.

Analysis

Analyze the words a child is able to write in terms of the child's oral vocabulary and understanding of categories.

Further knowledge will be gained by considering the performance on this task with the performance on letter and sound identification, hearing and recording sounds, writing, and phonemeic awareness.