Practitioner Guide

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by
the Australian Government through the Department of Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory
Government through the Department of Education and Training,
and supported by Charles Darwin University.

This guide on the assessment procedures required by teachers participating in the National Accelerated Literacy Program provides relevant information for:
- classroom practitioners
- principals
- school based co-coordinators
- program co-coordinators/consultants.

It provides information about:
- what is being assessed
- the purpose of each assessment procedure
- who needs to be assessed and how often
- how to administer the assessment procedure
- what the results of the assessment mean.

Guides

- The guides have been written for teachers who have attended professional development in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers’ handouts from the professional development sessions. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au

Assessing literacy development

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by
the Australian Government through the Department of Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory
Government through the Department of Education and Training,
and supported by Charles Darwin University.

ISBN 978-1-74200-062-6
Practitioner Guide

Assessing literacy development

nalp

National Accelerated Literacy Program
Practitioner Guide: Assessing literacy development
ISBN: 978-1-74200-062-6
SCIS order number: 1366964
Full bibliographic details are available from Curriculum Corporation.
Published by Curriculum Corporation
PO Box 177
Carlton South Vic 3053
Australia
Tel: (03) 9207 9600
Fax: (03) 9910 9800
Website: http://www.curriculum.edu.au

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education and Training (DET) and supported by Charles Darwin University.

Materials are produced under agreements between DEEWR and other education providers in relation to the National Accelerated Literacy Program. These education providers are:

- Department of Education and Training, Northern Territory
- Western Australia Aboriginal Independent Community Schools
- Department of Education and Children’s Services, South Australia
- Shalom Christian College, Queensland
- Catholic Education Office of Western Australia.

The Commonwealth retains the intellectual property rights in the Materials. The Commonwealth also owns the intellectual property in any Materials created by adapting or modifying the Materials.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2007. This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without the written permission of the Commonwealth of Australia acting through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

These notes were written by Wendy Cowey and Kate Mullin and have been produced as part of the National Accelerated Literacy Program.

Printed in Australia by uniprint NT

This book is dedicated to Kate Mullin, who tragically passed away on 30 June 2008. The National Accelerated Literacy Program team would like to acknowledge her contribution to the project. We are most grateful for the commitment, skills and expertise she brought to this project.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using this guide</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sourcing materials</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL assessment materials</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tests of phonemic awareness</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional professional reading</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational reading tests</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Level observational reading test</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Level observational reading test</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tests of Reading Comprehension (ToRCH)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is ToRCH?</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who should do a ToRCH test and how often?</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigating the teacher manual</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which test to give?</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials needed for ToRCH testing</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up the task</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoring ToRCH</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording ToRCH information</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues in the assessment of writing</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frameworks for assessing narrative texts</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood assessment</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition and spelling checklist</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early reader checklist</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assessment procedure</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopiable masters</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading evaluation record sheet – Predator’s Gold</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading evaluation record sheet – Thunderfish</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A framework for assessing narrative writing</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated literacy writing context sheet (A)</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated literacy writing context sheet (B)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition and spelling checklist</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early reader checklist</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
This booklet details the assessment procedures required by teachers participating in the National Accelerated Literacy Program. Each educational jurisdiction will also have its own assessment schedule.

It is envisaged that this booklet will provide support for the following groups of teaching professionals in monitoring student outcomes:

- classroom practitioners
- principals
- school based co-coordinators
- program co-coordinators/consultants.

This booklet has been written to provide the following information:

- what is being assessed
- the purpose of each assessment procedure
- who needs to be assessed and how often
- how to administer the assessment procedure
- what the results of the assessment mean.
Using this guide
Teaching the sequence

The National Accelerated Literacy Program consists of a cycle of interrelated activities based on a sequence beginning with literate orientation and focused on one selected text. The text may vary from a short, illustrated story written for early childhood students to several carefully selected passages from a longer book intended for older students.

Teachers spend, on average, an hour and a half a day teaching Accelerated Literacy. The total number of weeks spent on a text across a sequence of consecutive lessons will vary according to the age of the students and the complexity of the text.

Low and high order literate orientation are carried out before reading. The other strategies use the students’ fluent reading of and common knowledge about a text as teaching resources for extending their literacy competence. Further information on the teaching sequence can be found at http://www.nalp.edu.au.
In the National Accelerated Literacy Program (NALP), teachers are required to provide data for their students on specific elements in the schedule of assessment as required by their jurisdiction. This data is then entered on the NALP database, allowing graphs, tables and so on to be generated for use by schools/systems/sectors when reporting to a variety of stakeholders.

It is critical that those students who are absent when testing occurs be tested immediately on their return to school. Schools, co-ordinators and teachers need to work together to devise a means by which this can happen.

The assessment requirements of the NALP allow teachers and schools to use data for:

- diagnostic purposes
- teaching and planning purposes
- evaluating the overall effectiveness of their program.

Although the NALP assessment protocol aligns fully with the assessment purposes outlined in the curriculum documents of the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia, teachers need to ensure that they comply with the assessment demands of their state's Curriculum Framework and take note of standards that may be expected at different grades or levels of schooling.


### Preamble

Schools need to measure how well they are engaging Indigenous students in classrooms and parents/caregivers in the life of the school. School leaders and teachers need to develop their skills in collecting, analysing, interpreting and using student performance information (data and assessment literacy) in support of evidence-based approaches to improvement. Teachers need to see assessment data as saying something about *them*, what they are doing and what they need to do: ‘Our eventual success depends on our ferreting out student responses and adjusting our performance, not just theirs, in light of results.’ (Wiggins, G. *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998, page 290).

### Recommendation

To provide support to develop data and assessment literacy in school leaders and teachers to support evidence-based improvement planning.
Sourcing materials
AL assessment materials

The PM Benchmark Kit 2

Where to get it

Nelson Thomson Learning

- nelson@thomsonlearning.com.au

Reading levels in the pack were identified by considering the following: concepts (situations and themes), internal logic of the texts, high frequency words, sentence construction, and the Fry Readability Formula. The texts were trialled with children of an appropriate age to test for reliability.

Additional texts (needed in addition to the PM Benchmark Kit 2)

- Thunderfish, Simon Higgins, Random House, Sydney, 1999 (Grade 7)
- Predator's Gold, Phillip Reeve, Scholastic, London, 2003 (Grade 8)

Texts chosen for grades 7 & 8 were chosen according to the Lexile Levelled Reading Map, designed by Scholastic and endorsed by ACER (Australian Council of Educational Research). The Lexile Map levels texts on the basis of sentence length and word frequency.

Where to get them:

Any reputable bookshop or they can be ordered on-line from bookstores such as:

ToRCH tests of reading comprehension

Where to get it

Australian Council for Educational Research

- http://shop.acer.edu.au

ToRCH comprises a set of 12 reading tests designed to assist assessment of students’ reading comprehension from Year 3–10. It is not designed for use below Year 3 level. Students read a passage and then ‘retell’ it by filling in the gaps in an answer sheet using one or more words. ToRCH provides descriptive information about a student’s level of reading comprehension achievement.

Schools will need to purchase:

- a copy of the Teacher Manual
- multiple copies of the re-useable test booklet (10-15 copies should suffice as these booklets are reusable)
- answer sheets for each of the tests to be administered to students.

Marie Clay, an observation survey of early literacy achievement

Where to get it

Enter title in any of the below websites or any reputable educational book supplier.

- http://pd.heinemann.com/books/

There are a number of observation procedures detailed in this book, along with the materials used to conduct them. The procedures are useful for teachers who want to observe how young children read and write.

Only the 'Letter Identification and Concepts about Print' observational procedures are required to be administered.
Yopp Singer test of phonemic segmentation

Where to get it

- [http://teams.lacoe.edu/reading/assessments/yopp.html](http://teams.lacoe.edu/reading/assessments/yopp.html)

This test can be used from Transition to the end of Grade 1 to assess a student's ability to discriminate between sounds within words. Phonemic awareness and reading success are positively correlated in much of the literature on emergent literacy.

Other tests of phonemic awareness

In addition to phonemic segmentation, students’ capacity to rhyme, match, blend and manipulate sounds in words can be assessed using a variety of materials available on websites. In addition, the Phonological Awareness Assessment Instrument comprising these assessments can be found in:

Additional professional reading

Focusing on comprehension
Teaching and Learning with ToRCH
Where to get it
Australian Council of Educational Research
• http://shop.acer.edu.au/acer-shop/product/0864316763

This resource allows teachers to analyse student performance with ToRCH and to plan teaching and learning activities to develop reading comprehension.

Three levels of comprehension
How to ensure that comprehension questions challenge students’ thinking beyond the literal.

Where to get it
• http://www.curriculum.edu.au
• http://www.myread.org/guide_three.htm
• http://www.tki.org.nz/r/esol/esolonline/classroom/teach_strats/3levels/home_e.php

Bloom’s taxonomy
How to ensure that comprehension questions challenge students’ thinking beyond the literal.

• http://www.coun.uvic.ca/learn/program/hndouts/bloom.html
Observational reading tests
This testing relates to all students at all phases of schooling. Testing needs to follow standard procedures, both at school level and across the program as a whole. Individual Level (IL) and Working Level (WL) tests are both observational reading tests and are used to gather data about the reading accuracy of students (their ability to decode and use meaning), on both unseen texts and texts which have been worked on in class.

During observational reading tests the teacher listens to a student read and records details of the student’s performance on a prepared recording sheet. A crucial element in the use of observational reading tests in the NALP assessment regime is the analysis of the data collected so that it may inform future teaching and planning.

**Individual Level observational reading test**

**Purpose**

The IL observational reading test is a test of a student’s reading accuracy on unseen texts. IL testing needs to occur shortly after a student enters the NALP. This may be at the beginning of the academic year or at any point during the year. IL testing also occurs at the end of the academic year or twelve-month period of instruction or when a student exits the program. In this way, data can be collected that shows the student’s reading accuracy on unseen texts both at the beginning and at the end of his or her period of instruction in the NALP program.

End-of-year IL assessment data can be rolled over to become the start of year assessment data for students who continue in the program from year to year. For some schools, the beginning and end of their academic year may not coincide with the calendar year.

Teachers will be aware that student transience can be a limiting factor when collecting data and so must be prepared to take students aside and test them whenever the occasion requires it, rather than wait for the end of a term/year. In this way, the NALP can gather the ‘fullest’ data possible and be in a position to evaluate its effectiveness.
Texts used for IL testing

Most of these texts come from the PM Benchmark Kit 2. A series of texts from this kit has been chosen to represent grade-level equivalent reading accuracy and this selection is detailed below. Two additional texts have been added to those from the PM Benchmark Kit 2. These were chosen to extend testing beyond grade 6 level. A lexile levelling framework was used when choosing these additional texts. Lexile levelling forms the basis of many commercially produced reading programs.

Complete or part text is used from the PM Benchmark Kit 2 for testing purposes to assess decoding grade level equivalents 1-6, and each comes with its own recording sheet. The texts for Grades 7 and 8 equivalents come from the opening pages of both Thunderfish and Predator’s Gold and recording sheets for them are found in the photocopiable masters section of this guide.

Selected texts for IL testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade level equivalent</th>
<th>Level of Benchmark Kit 2</th>
<th>Text title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early transition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>At the zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late transition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The big plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tom’s train ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>The greedy dog and the bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>The miller, his son and their donkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Saved by a sense of smell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Tracks by the stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Cyclone Tracy destroys Darwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lexile level 830</td>
<td>Thunderfish (first 304 words)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lexile level 960</td>
<td>Predator’s Gold (first 298 words, see P50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before conducting an IL test

Always check to see if the student is already on the NALP database. If this is the case, then unnecessary testing may be avoided and time saved.

The database can provide useful information even for those students who have a history of disrupted schooling. If a student appears on the database, teachers can use the IL information provided to target particular texts as starting points for new IL procedures. For example, if a student last appeared on the database a few years ago with an IL of grade 5, then it would be reasonable to suggest that he/she starts testing with a text of at least grade 5 level and work on from that point.

Preparation for IL testing

The materials needed for IL testing include:

- PM Benchmark Kit 2 plus a copy of Thunderfish by Simon Higgins and Predator’s Gold by Phillip Reeve
- recording sheets for the texts referred to in Table 3 – the PM Benchmark Kit 2 provides recording sheets for teachers to photocopy, while recording sheets for Predator’s Gold by Phillip Reeve can be found on page 50 of this guide
- video camera, tapes and labels if the testing is to be videotaped. Videotaped test sessions can then be burnt to DVD or downloaded onto a hard drive to create individual student folders showing reading progress (during video recording, both student and teacher should be on screen – see note below.)
- pencil
- calculator (if required).

Note: ideally, ILs should be videotaped, as they provide a powerful visual record of students’ reading development over time. Schools can then choose to use these recordings at parent/community information sessions to both engage the community and enlist support for teachers’ work.

Schools need to ensure they have:

- the appropriate permission for each student before videotaping testing
- the appropriate permission for each student before showing this video material in the public domain.
Setting up the IL test

- Allow the students new to the program to browse through the texts and choose one which he/she feels comfortable reading.
- Ask the student to sit at a table with you.
- Some teachers like to sit beside and slightly behind the student so that he/she is not distracted by what the teacher does during the test.
- Allow the student to take control of the text and the reading process – this means the teacher does not handle the text for the student.
- The student turns the pages – you may have to ask him/her to do so.
- Explain clearly what the student needs to do before allowing him/her to attempt the test. If he/she comes to a word he/she can't read, either leave it out or go back to the beginning of the sentence and try again.
- The teacher may read the title of the book/text to the student before testing begins.

During the IL test

- Avoid eye contact – you should be looking at the text. This encourages students to rely on their own resources during the testing process.
- If the student falters WAIT – at least 10 seconds, preferably longer – before saying, 'Leave that word out and read on.'
- Do not prompt students when they are reading as this causes stress from overload and there is nothing to be gained.
- Do not affirm or negate students' efforts in any way.
- Intervene and bring the test to a halt when:
  - the student is consistently making more than one error in every ten words (the need for this will be evident as there will be a breakdown in both decoding and comprehension)
  - the reading breaks down and the student can go no further.
- Finish the session by saying, 'I'll just read that part to you' and by telling the student one thing he/she did well.

Teachers should mark this place on their recording sheet. The recording sheets provided with the texts are useful for analysing student errors and the information gleaned will prove useful in the planning of subsequent lessons.

To gain further information about the reading strategies of older students who do not register an IL reading level, teachers should consider using the Early Reader Checklist.
Teachers need to ensure that they:

- document observed reading behaviours in order to identify reading strategies (both productive and unproductive) currently being employed by individual students (see below for suggestions)
- make focused comments to students about observed positive reading behaviours in an effort to foster the development of positive reading strategies.

As the PM Benchmark Kit 2 is also used to test older readers who may be reading well below their chronological age, teachers need to bring the usual sensitivities to bear on the testing situation.

**How to ‘mark’ the IL recording sheet**

An example of a marked sheet appears on page 22.

**To mark the sheet:**

- record the student's name, age, grade level, school and the date of the test on the recording sheet
- use the following notation:
  - draw a line through any word read incorrectly and above it note the word read
  - when students read a word incorrectly at first and then reread it correctly, mark SC (self-correction) above the word – if possible note the word read incorrectly in the initial attempt
  - circle words omitted
  - indicate words inserted with a ^ plus the word
  - underline words which have been repeated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error behaviour</th>
<th>Non-error behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word read incorrectly and not self-corrected.</td>
<td>Word read incorrectly and self-corrected (SC).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words omitted.</td>
<td>An appeal for help that is ignored and the student recovers and continues reading accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words inserted.</td>
<td>Words repeated (underline).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pronunciation linked to dialect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adding comments to the recording sheet

Wherever possible, additional information should be recorded about the student’s reading behaviours. Comments should be predominantly about what the student can do – not about what he/she can’t do – and could include the following points.

- **Orientation to the reading**
  - Was the reader confident, relaxed, anxious etc?
- **Fluency**
  - Was the reading fluent and expressive or slow, laboured, word-by-word?
- **Use of meaning**
  - Did the errors change the meaning of the text?
  - Did the reading make sense?
  - Did the reader use the pictures to determine meaning?
- **Decoding skills**
  - Did the reader attempt to ‘sound out’ words letter by letter, guess unknown words using initial letters or substitute meaningful words?
  - Did the reader use first letter cues?
- **Other reading behaviours**
  - Did the reader have 1:1 correspondence? (Ask early childhood readers to point as they read.)
  - When the reader came to an unfamiliar word, did he/she stop and refuse to go on, stop and appeal to the listener for help, re-read from the beginning of the sentence, miss the word out and read on?
READING EVALUATION RECORD SHEET

STUDENT'S NAME: _____________________________ Date: _______________
Age: 13 _______ Year Level: 7 _______

Text: _Eye of the Eagle_ Level: _Early Secondary_ School: ________________
Total number of words read: 98 _______ Number of errors: 4 _______
Number of self corrections: 1 _______ % Accuracy: 95.9% _______

Gudap stirred. It wasn’t the cold, although that was penetrating enough. Hunger?
sensed
Something had woken him. Something more sensed than heard. His thoughts came
together. It had been the chirruping of birds. Why were they on the move so early?

Disturbed perhaps? If so, by what?

Gudap’s extended family group had been forced by diminishing food resources to travel
diminishing
west. Prolonged dry weather had gradually shrunk the springs and waterholes in their
shrunk
traditional area. It had become harder and harder to find and hunt the animals and birds
had
that normally made up a large part of their diet. 98

Comments: Deliberate reading, observed punctuation and phrasing though not expressive. Read at 'easy' level.
Self-corrected once.
Read some multi-syllabled words quite correctly but still had problems with 'diminishing' and 'sensed', so this is
an area for future teaching.
The student read this WL text at 96% accuracy. It is age appropriate and the language is complex with expansions that required the reader not only to read multi syllable words such as ‘penetrating’ and ‘chirruping’, which would probably be unfamiliar to her, but to read and interpret noun groups such as ‘prolonged dry weather’ in theme position in the clause.

The student made errors that show she was trying to break words up such as ‘sens-ed’ and ‘dimishing’ (for diminishing). She was very nearly correct with both those words. She had trouble pronouncing ‘sh’ when followed by ‘r’ in ‘shrunk’.

She self-corrected once when she had predicted ‘the springs had’ and then realised the text said ‘the springs and waterholes’.

The student read the text fluently though fairly slowly and deliberately as she decoded and checked a text that was challenging for her. She did not make her voice sound as though she was asking a question and treated the question marks as if they were full stops. She did, however, observe the other punctuation and phrased the text appropriately in most instances. This student would benefit from decoding practise in the spelling segment of the teaching sequence and perhaps some practise reading aloud to observe question marks.

**How to calculate reading accuracy**

- Record the number of words read.
- Record the number of self-corrections made.
- Record the number of errors made.
- Calculate reading accuracy rate simply as: number of words read correctly (i.e. total number of words read – errors), divided by the total number of words in the passage being assessed, multiplied by 100 = %

Reading accuracy calculations need to be based on the total number of words in the text, and not just the total number of words that the student reads.
What do the results mean?

If a student is reading at less than 90% accuracy, the text is too difficult. The student will be so overloaded that there will be no opportunity to observe that student’s reading strategies or determine how he or she attempts to solve problems.

If a student is reading at above 95% accuracy, the text is easy. The student will not have to bring text analysis skills to the task and the teacher cannot observe the student’s reading strategies.

Between 90-94% is an instructional level for a student. The teacher will be able to observe the strategies the student uses to solve reading problems and this information feeds back into future teaching episodes.

Working Level observational reading test

Purpose

WL observational reading tests relate to a student’s reading accuracy on passages of text which have been worked on intensively during Accelerated Literacy lessons.

Regular WL assessments assist teachers by providing information about a student’s understanding and reading development. (eg are students learning what the teacher is teaching; do they understand the meaning of the text?) Reading accuracy testing is done on the whole passage taught during Accelerated Literacy lessons and the information gained assists teachers in planning for future lessons.

In essence, a WL observational reading test result is a measure of a student’s reading capacity when working in a supported learning environment. Such a learning environment creates a ‘zone of proximal development’ whereby both student and teacher work together at a much higher level than would be possible if the student worked independently. This zone relates to a student’s potential to learn. WL results will initially be at a higher level than IL results.
Texts used for WL testing

The texts used for WL testing are those passages students have been working on intensively in class as part of the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence. Regular WL assessments assist teachers by providing information about a student’s understanding and reading development, i.e. are students learning what the teacher is teaching; do they understand the meaning of the text?

Reading accuracy testing is done on the whole passage taught during Accelerated Literacy lessons and the information gained assists teachers in planning for future lessons.

If teachers use texts for which there are no teaching notes, they need to ensure that they comply with the following:

- Assess the whole of any early reading book if it contains fewer than 100 words.
- Assess at least 100 words of a lower primary reading book.
- Assess a minimum of 150-200 words of an upper primary or junior secondary book.
- Decide on the number of words in the passage to be assessed before the assessment. This number becomes ‘total number of words in the passage’ and is used to calculate the percentage accuracy for all students, even where a student only attempts part of the passage.

Frequency of assessment

WL observational reading testing should be conducted regularly throughout the program. Ideally, students should be tested at fortnightly intervals. Where this is not possible, teachers need to ensure that they conduct WL testing at least twice each term. These results need to be recorded and analysed. Where students have particularly low levels of reading accuracy, teachers can use the passage worked on intensively in class to give these students regular reading practise (2-3 times weekly) in order to improve fluency.

Conducting regular WL testing is critical if teachers are to monitor the pace at which a student’s supported working level is closing in on an age-appropriate reading level. Maximum acceleration towards an age-appropriate level can only be achieved when gains made during work on one text can be transferred to others. Teachers have a critical monitoring role to ensure that this is happening.
Formal WL testing

Materials needed include:

- a copy of the book from which the passage is taken
- a printed (double spaced) copy of the passage to be used as a recording sheet (teachers will have to provide this)
- a pencil
- a calculator.

In all respects, setting up a WL observational reading test is identical to setting up an IL observational reading test. Scoring ceases when:

- the student is consistently making more than one error in every ten words (the need for this will be evident as there will be a breakdown in both decoding and comprehension)
- reading breaks down and the student can go no further even when prompted to 'read on'.

Teachers need to record the outcome of formal WL testing procedures for inclusion on school/system database/s. When formal WL testing breaks down and scoring has stopped, observation of a student's reading behaviour can continue on an informal basis, as described below.
Informal WL testing

The nature of the support should be recorded on the test sheet and used by the teacher for teaching and planning purposes.

Initial support may include:

- student appeals for help – WAIT 10 seconds, and then suggest the student reads on (‘Can you leave the word out and read on?’)
- student cannot leave the word out and read on – ask the student to re-read from the start of the sentence (‘Try that again from here’).

For additional support:

- a meaning cue may be given (‘Remember what happened here...?’). Don't persist with meaning cues to a point where the reader is trying to guess what you are hinting at
- read the sentence with the student, including the unknown word and allow the student to read on (‘Let’s read it together, shall we?’). Do this only if the student is otherwise reading fluently and accurately.
Other opportunities for assessment during WL testing

WL testing provides teachers with opportunities for the assessment of oral language beyond formal oral presentation. By engaging students in discussion of the passage being used for WL testing, or even discussion at whole text level, teachers can assess the language of explanation, clarification, comparison, justification, etc. used by students.

- ‘Tell me why ...?’
- ‘What does ... mean when she says ...?’
- ‘In what ways is ... like ...?’

Further assessment of oral language and comprehension can be achieved by compiling a few questions about the passage aimed at the three levels of comprehension:

- literal
- inferential/interpretive
- evaluative/applied.

These questions need only be responded to orally. When assessing oral language development, teachers need to ensure that they comply with the assessment requirements of their own state or territory curriculum framework and use evidence from a variety of sources (WL testing being one of these sources).
Tests of Reading Comprehension (ToRCH)
What is ToRCH?

The ToRCH tests are a set of 12 reading passages, each with its own (200-900 word) reading passage and answer sheet designed to assess students’ reading comprehension from Year 3-10. The passages comprise both narrative and informational texts.

The ToRCH tests provide normative data, as well as information on the ability of students to construct meaning from text. This data can be used to compare the achievement of individual students with that of other Year 3-10 students in Australian schools.

It is possible for individual students to be given different test passages and for the test still to be administered in a group setting. The average time required to complete a ToRCH test is approximately 45 minutes.

Who should do a ToRCH test and how often?

A ToRCH test should be administered to students once they achieve an IL of grade 4 or above. Some students already enter the program for the first time operating with an IL of grade 4 or above. For such students:

- testing needs to take place on entry to the program and then again at the end of the year (this will require the administration of two different ToRCH tests during that particular academic year – one on entry to the program and one at the end of the period of instruction)
- their ToRCH score from the end of that year can then be rolled over to the beginning of the following year to provide baseline data for that year. From this point on, these students will be tested annually, usually at the end of the year. However, if teachers are aware that a student is leaving the program before the end of the year, they should take the opportunity to administer a ToRCH test at that time.

Some teachers/coordinators may choose to administer the ToRCH test at any time during the academic year to monitor the comprehension development of particular students. However, where this happens, it does so in addition to the testing framework outlined above.
Navigating the teacher manual

The Teacher Manual provides a clear, detailed account of how to administer the ToRCH tests and make use of the scores that are generated. By spending a few minutes familiarising themselves with the layout and content of the Teacher Manual, teachers will come to realise that only selected pages apply to them, and their students, at any one point in time.

Important content

- Selecting an appropriate ToRCH test for your student/s
- Administering ToRCH
- Scoring ToRCH
- ToRCH Norm Tables
- Described regions along the ToRCH scale
- ToRCH report

Which test to give?

Initially, at least, teachers will have to match the difficulty of a ToRCH comprehension test with their student’s expected level of achievement. Information from the student’s IL, plus information from other assessment procedures and observations, will have a bearing on this judgment. In addition, teachers need to consider the information in the ‘ToRCH test selection’ grid in the Teacher Manual.

More than one ToRCH test may need to be administered, especially if a student finds a particular test either too easy or too difficult. In general, it is better to start a student on an easier test and build confidence.

Lack of familiarity with the test regime has been shown to have a negative impact on student performance. To counteract this effect, teachers can design ‘ToRCH-type’ tests based on passages that have been studied intensively in class.
Materials needed for ToRCH testing

- The Teacher Manual
- Test booklets (one for each student doing the test)
- ToRCH answer sheets relating to the test passage/s (one for each student doing the test)
- Pencil
- Wall clock (for timing)

Setting up the task

In order to conduct the test in exactly the same way, regardless of where it is administered, both administration guidelines and a script are provided for teachers (see Teacher Manual – Administering ToRCH).

Teachers need to:

- familiarise themselves with the test administration guidelines so that they don't add to any potential stress that may surround the testing situation by being hesitant or unclear
- ensure that students have the opportunity to do the Practice Example
- ensure that students record their name, year level and date of the test (for schools operating multi-age group settings, it is critical to record the student's date of birth in order to calculate his/her Year Level equivalent – teachers may need to get this information from the school's records)
- set up the room/space to minimise distractions
- be positive and encouraging – without interfering in the testing process.
Scoring ToRCH

ToRCH is made up of 12 different tests, each with its own reading passage and answer sheet. A student can obtain a ‘raw score’ by completing any of the tests, but the results would not be comparable with raw scores obtained by students completing different ToRCH tests. This is because the tests vary in their difficulty and number of questions. By converting a raw score into a ‘scale score’, any result can be compared to any other result, irrespective of which of the twelve ToRCH tests was actually completed by the student.

To analyse any of the ToRCH Answer Sheets, teachers need to have access to the ToRCH Teacher Manual. In order to arrive at a scale score (ToRCH) teachers need to:

- mark the answer sheet as per the TORCH score keys (pp 86-117)
- circle the student’s correct responses on the appropriate Pattern of response form (pages 69–80) and add up the total number of correct responses to find the raw score
- convert the raw score to a scale score (ToRCH) using the appropriate norm table (pages 50–61)
- use the appropriate TORCH norm table and refer to the stanine readings.

Most TORCH tests of comprehension allow for more than one year-related score to be detailed. Only if the result falls within the fourth to sixth stanine of a particular year level can a student be determined to be reading at that year level.

Example 1: Sam

Sam is a Year 4 student and his teacher has chosen ‘Donna Dingo’ for his ToRCH test. Her professional judgment, plus the advice in the ToRCH test selection section, suggests that this is a good ToRCH test for Sam. Sam achieves a Raw Score of 10 on ‘Donna Dingo’, using the ToRCH score keys. Using the ToRCH norm table for ‘Donna Dingo’, this score of 10 is traced horizontally into the scale score (ToRCH) column which gives him a scale score of 39.2.

Traced horizontally into the Year 4 Percentile rank and stanine column, this puts Sam in stanine 5. If we allow for a margin of error of plus or minus 3.4, Sam’s stanine score would still remain 5 if rounded up, or stanine 4 if rounded down.
### 'Donna Dingo’ TORCH norm table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw score (number correct)</th>
<th>Scale score (TORCH)</th>
<th>Error (TORCH)</th>
<th>Percentile rank</th>
<th>Stanine</th>
<th>Percentile rank</th>
<th>Stanine</th>
<th>Percentile rank</th>
<th>Stanine</th>
<th>Percentile rank</th>
<th>Stanine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>&gt;6.8</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>&gt;7.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do the results mean?
(See also *Described regions along the ToRCH Scale* in the Teacher Manual)

Sam’s reading comprehension falls within acceptable levels for students at his level of schooling. He should be able to cope with the reading demands placed on him as a Year 4 student.

From his percentile rank, we can say that he has performed better than 50% of other Year 4s in the reference group. A description of Sam’s reading comprehension development can be gained from ‘Described Regions Along the ToRCH Scale’. He can deal with longer texts of different genres on some unfamiliar topics and can locate specific information of a literal nature. He can use several pieces of literal information to infer relationships.

Sam’s teacher needs to be aware of what skills he will need to develop and practise if he is to move to the next developmental region, where he will be dealing with:

- more complex language structures
- searching for and locating information in different parts of a text
- using information from several locations in the text to infer relationships which are not directly stated.

**Example 2: Larissa**

Larissa is a Year 5 student by date of birth. She is working in a multi-age group setting, as the school does not have a separate Year 5 class. Using information from a number of sources, including an IL test, Larissa’s teacher has determined that she should do the ‘Donna Dingo’ ToRCH test.

Larissa achieved a raw score of 9 on ‘Donna Dingo’. Traced horizontally into the scale score (ToRCH) column, this gives her a scale score of 37.5.

Traced horizontally into the Year 5 Percentile rank and stanine column, this puts Larissa in stanine 3. However, this score has an error margin of plus or minus 3.4 on the scale score. This means that Larissa could actually have a score of 37.5 + 3.4, giving her a scale score of 40.9 and elevating her to stanine 4. Alternatively, her score could just as easily have been 37.5 – 3.4, giving her a scale score of 34.1, which would put her near the bottom of stanine 3.
What do the results mean? 
(See also Described regions along the ToRCH Scale in the Teacher Manual)

Larissa’s results are inconclusive. If she is operating at stanine 4 level, she is probably just coping with the reading demands of the work being set. If, however, she is operating at stanine 3 level, she is definitely struggling to meet the reading demands placed on an average Year 5 class.

Larissa’s teacher would be well advised to retest her on an easier test – ‘Lizards Love Eggs’, ‘Feeding Puff’ or ‘At the Zoo’ – to get a more accurate idea of her reading comprehension ability. If the test concludes that she is in stanine 4 on a Year 4 text, then she is already one year behind the ‘average’ Year 5 student. Using the ‘Described regions along the ToRCH scale’, compare what students at stanine 5 at Year 5 can do with a scale score between 44-48, with what Larissa can do as a stanine 3 student at Year 5 with a scale score of 35.

Why the focus on stanines 4-6?

Generally speaking, the margin for error starts to increase markedly below stanine 4 and above stanine 6 in the ToRCH norm tables. This can have a significant impact on both percentile rank and stanine score. Around stanines 4-6, the margin of error tends to be at its lowest and therefore the results are more reliable.

As a general rule, if a student’s results lie below the 4th stanine, the test is too difficult for him/her. If he/she lies above the 6th stanine, the test is too easy for him/her. In both instances, the student would need to be retested on a more appropriate test.

Recording ToRCH information

Teachers need to ensure that the following information is recorded:

- the name of the test undertaken by each student
- the ToRCH scale score achieved and if it falls within the 4-6 stanine range (otherwise teachers need to consider retesting the student).
Writing
Just as students need to be given opportunities to practise fluent reading, so must they be given opportunities to practise and experiment with their writing.

Fluent reading of familiar texts reduces cognitive overload for students: decoding automaticity provides mental space for effective comprehension. Writing practise reduces cognitive overload for students, as handwriting, spelling and composition of their text are taken to an automatic level, thus allowing mental space for the development of creativity and ‘personal voice’.

As students progress through the teaching sequence, they can be engaged in writing activities that supplement and support the work done in their Accelerated Literacy lessons. Depending on the phase of schooling and the text being studied, they may practise letter formation in sand trays or with playdough, draw large pictures of characters and attach speech bubbles to show what characters may be thinking, make story maps or wall murals placing sentences from the text underneath or engage in short cloze activities. There are a myriad of writing tasks that can be undertaken by students as they progress towards the writing stage of the teaching sequence.

Issues in the assessment of writing

- Writing for assessment purposes needs to have been generated 'independently' by students. This does not preclude the collection of other writing samples in order to monitor student writing development.
- In order to make judgments about a student's writing level, teachers need to collect a number of pieces of writing over a period of time (weeks). One piece of writing does not provide sufficient information on which to base a judgment about a student's writing level/band/scale. Ideally, three pieces of writing (one generated completely independently) need to be collected when a student enters the program, or at the beginning of each year. Regular collection and levelling of writing samples throughout the year are crucial if writing development is to be monitored.
- Short pieces of writing are particularly problematic and do not provide sufficient information on which to base a solid judgment (although they can still be used to inform lesson planning).
- The nature of the writing task can limit student achievement and may not allow for the use of resources built up during the reading and writing stages of the Accelerated Literacy teaching sequence. Recount tasks of the type ‘What I did at the weekend’ can severely limit the achievement of writing outcomes.
- Teachers need to be explicit about the nature of the writing task and what resources students need to bring to it for successful completion.
• When possible, work samples should be assessed in 'moderation groups', in order to make consistent judgments. Moderation groups help guard against an impressionistic style of assessment which limits both the potential for useful feedback to students and planning information for teachers.
• It is useful for a whole staff to get involved in moderation exercises so that it shares a common understanding of 'the standard'.
• Providing contextual information about the writing task for purposes of assessment is crucial. Always record the date, the conditions under which the writing was generated and whether the writing was generated independently or with support (see pages 56-57 – use whichever of these forms you prefer).

Frameworks for assessing narrative texts

Teachers might find it helpful to look at the writing assessment criteria used for national literacy testing, commonly referred to as benchmark testing.

• http://cms.curriculum.edu.au/litbench/default.asp
• http://www.naplan.edu.au/test_samples/writing/writing.html

This provides teachers with an opportunity to align their assessment of narrative writing with that used at national, state or territory level. It may also assist them in better understanding the testing process and what is valued in such an assessment regime.

A framework for the assessment of narrative writing has been developed by Dr Mary Macken-Horarik formerly of the University of New England and now at the University of Canberra. With its in-built rubric, this framework provides teachers with assessment criteria which can be applied to any narrative writing task. A copy of this assessment grid can be found in the photocopiable masters section.
Other documents used to monitor outcomes for ESL learners

ESL scales

*ESL Scales*, published by Curriculum Corporation, assists teachers to record the progress of students learning English as a Second Language (ESL). *ESL Scales* is a framework for systematic interpretation of observed language behaviours. Level statements, outcomes and pointers provide a basis for assessment and reporting.

**ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools Vol 1**

*ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools Vol 1* is published by the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia. It includes ‘ESL bandscales’, which provide descriptions of ESL learner progress at junior primary, middle/upper primary and secondary age levels. These ESL bandscales will enable teachers to monitor and report on ESL learners’ ability in using English in a range of contexts. The bandscales also provide teachers with information on learning processes and pedagogical approaches. Of special interest to practising teachers will be the exemplar assessment activities and reporting formats. This is the assessment tool that the AIC schools in WA use.

**Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners**

This work has been developed around the original document, *ESL Development: Language and Literacy in Schools, Volume 1* (see above). This can be accessed through:

Early childhood assessment
Word recognition and spelling checklist

Target group

The word recognition and spelling checklist activity is designed primarily for use in early childhood classrooms (Transition-grade 2) but can be used in any classroom where there are non-readers.

Purpose of the activity

The word recognition and spelling checklist is a good indicator of whether students are developing control of decoding. Because students will often read fluently and accurately, it is sometimes easy for a teacher to assume that they recognise the words of the text out of context. If they don’t, then spelling activities on these words will have limited success.

Where there are several students in a class who do not recognise any words out of context, a teacher knows that more time needs to be spent on transformations and word recognition activities.

Regular monitoring of word recognition and spelling provides a profile of each student’s developing control of decoding. If this progress is not happening, teachers need to review their practise in an effort to identify where their teaching can be more explicit and supportive. Where there is a steady increase in the number of words a student can recognise out of context and can spell correctly, the teaching is going well for that student.

It is not necessary to continue working on one text until every student can recognise every word. Rather, monitor students’ progress regularly on whichever text the class is working on.

Teachers choose the words from the text they are using for intensive study and identify those they want to focus on for spelling. These words will be both content and high-frequency words. Select about 10 words per session.
Materials needed for the assessment

- Selected words written on pieces of card.
- Small blackboards and chalk or whiteboards and pen.
- Board cleaners.
- Record sheets: one per student. (See photocopiable masters.)
- Clear plastic strip (to use with reading).
- The text that words are taken from for reference, if necessary.

Word recognition: in and out of context

Setting up the task

- Explain to the student that you are going to look at some of the words they know from the books they have been reading.
- Place the word cards for the test in a pile face down between you and the student.
- Explain that you are going to play 'My pile, your pile'. The object is for the student to get as many words as possible in his/her pile. In fact, the teacher makes sure this happens.
- Ask the student to turn over the first word and ask him/her to read the word to you.
- If he/she can tell you what it is, tick the column 'Out of context' and proceed onto the next word (the student keeps the known word).
- If the student does not know the word, open the appropriate page of the text and ask him/her to try to find the word. Then ask if he/she knows what the word is now.
- If the student knows the word after he/she has found it in the text and read up to it, tick 'In context'.
- If the student cannot find the word in the text, place a plastic strip under the sentence and say, 'I'll read this sentence to you and you see if you can tell me where the word is.' Point to each word as you read. You may need to read the sentence more than once until the student identifies the word. Tick the 'Read to' column.
‘Out of context’ spelling

Monitoring spelling should follow immediately after the reading. Test only those words the student could identify ‘Out of Context’. These are words which will have been taught during the spelling stage of the AL teaching sequence.

Setting up the task

- Use the word cards the student read correctly out of context.
- Read the word to the student and ask him/her to write it on his/her blackboard. Remind the student to say the word softly in its ‘chunks’ as they write.
- Try each word in turn.
- Record the student’s spelling attempt in the column ‘Spelling’ in the student record sheet or tick the box if the word is spelt correctly.

Early reader checklist

What is the purpose?

On entry to their first year of schooling, it may be assumed that the majority of students will be non-readers (ie they have an IL of 0). During their time in the NALP, these students will develop specific skills that will need careful monitoring.

As young students engage in Literate Orientation, there is always the potential for them to rely on memory of the text rather than engage with the words telling the story. While students’ memory of the text can be exploited and used to engage them with the print and teach them about decoding (including phonics), teachers have to plan to have this engagement happen successfully. The early reader checklist procedure has been designed to assist teachers in monitoring students’ reading development and in making decisions about the emphasis in future lessons.

A copy of the early reader checklist is in the photocopiable masters section (page 59).

Who needs to be monitored?

- Students in their first year of school.
- Older students whose literacy development is delayed.
How to use the early reader checklist procedure

Make this assessment as much like a game as you can. It should be relaxed and enjoyable for the student and he/she should feel successful at the end of the session.

1. Ask the student to read the story and point to the words as they read (or ‘Read with your finger’). This allows the teacher to check for 1:1 correspondence (i.e., can the student match a spoken word with a written word?). If the student is ‘reading’ from memory, teachers need to ensure that they make the necessary adjustments in planning and teaching to ensure that students make the transition to attend to print.

2. Teachers will also be able to observe whether the student knows that:
   - print carries a message
   - print goes across the page from left to right
   - print goes from top to bottom on a page and at the end of a line there is a return sweep to the beginning of the line below.

3. Write a sentence from the text on a transformations strip. Show the student where it came from. Cut the sentence into single words. Ask the student to read the sentence to you from the cards.
   - Does the student have 1:1 correspondence?
   - Does he/she notice discrepancies? Does the student run out of words while reading and pointing, or are there words left over? Does the student have a re-reading strategy or does he/she just ignore the discrepancy?

4. Check the student’s ability to recognize words in and out of context.

    **In context**
    - Ask the student to close his/her eyes while you turn a word over. Ask the student to open his/her eyes and tell you what word is missing.
    - If the student is correct, turn over the word and tick ‘yes’. Even if the student has to read up to the word to work it out, tick the ‘yes’ box because the student has been able to use the context to work the word out.
    - If the student cannot identify the word, the teacher points to each word and reads. The student will be able to identify the word then. Tick ‘no’ for ‘Identify words in context’ and ‘yes’ for ‘Can the student identify words when the teacher reads them?’.
Out of context

- Jumble the words and make them into a pile. Tell the student you are going to play a game of ‘My pile, your pile’. Ask the student to turn over each word in turn and tell you what it is. If the student can identify words out of context, tick ‘yes’.
- If the student cannot read the words out of context, show him/her the sentence in the book and allow him/her to read up to the word or read the sentence to the student until he/she can identify the word. Tick ‘no’ for ‘Can the student identify words out of context?’
- If the student can read just some of the words out of context, make a note of this in the comments at the bottom of the checklist.

Other assessment procedures

Junior primary students, particularly those in the early phase of junior primary, have a lot to learn about literacy. For those teachers who want to isolate and monitor a particular literacy skill, the following assessment procedures are recommended. However, it must be remembered that acquiring expertise in any, or all, of these literacy skills does not mean that this knowledge and understanding will automatically transfer to the world of story and books. Teachers need to provide opportunities for skills to be transferred to print and visual text so that they may flourish and develop in a meaningful context.
Marie Clay: an observation survey of early literacy development

This publication details six separate observational procedures, namely:

- letter identification
- concepts about print
- writing vocabulary
- hearing and recording sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- word test
- running records (the NALP Observational Reading Record provides for similar information to be recorded).

For each observational procedure, information is provided on:

- who should be tested
- how each procedure should be administered
- how observations should be recorded on the recording sheets
- how your students perform relative to the performance of a similar cohort of students (stanines)
- what the information collected means about your students' literacy skills development
- what to focus on in future lesson planning.

It is critical that teachers familiarise themselves with the administration procedures for each of the observation procedures so that they can be administered in a standard way each time.

'A child who is placed in the 4-6 range of stanines should find himself able to participate in the average classroom activities ... The child in the 3-4 stanine range is already struggling with average tasks in the class and needs extra teacher attention if this situation is to be changed. The child with 0-2 scores is unlikely to 'catch up' without immediate, intensive expert teaching.' (Marie Clay)
Yopp Singer test of phonemic segmentation

Reading research suggests that there is a strong correlation between phonemic awareness and success in reading and spelling acquisition for young children. Students who struggle to discriminate sounds in words often have difficulty identifying the graphemes (the code) which represent those sounds in written language. The development of phonemic awareness skills needs to be undertaken with the intention of transferring such skills and knowledge about language to the world of books.

The Yopp Singer test of phonemic segmentation can be used with Transition, pre-primary and grade 1 students, in an effort to establish whether they can hear individual sounds within words. The focus is on aural and oral language and does not require students to read or write. Instead, they have to identify sounds they hear within words read to them by the teacher.

The test materials can be found on the following websites:

- http://teams.lacoe.edu/reading/assessments/yopp.html

Dr Hallie Yopp contends that students need to finish their Transition year with at least 12 out of 22 test items correct in order to make normal progress towards reading success.

Testing other features of phonemic awareness

In addition to the skill of segmentation, students need to master the following language skills:

- rhyming
- matching
- blending
- manipulation.

Access this website for testing resources:

- http://teams.lacoe.edu/reading/assessments/assessments.html
Frozen North

Freya woke early and lay for a while in the dark, feeling her city shiver and sway beneath her as its powerful engines sent it skimming across the ice. Sleepily, she waited for her servants to come and help her out of bed. It took her a few moments to remember that they were all dead.

She threw off the covers, lit the argon lamps and waded through dusty mounds of cast-off clothes to her bathroom. For several weeks now she had been working up the courage to have a shower, but once again this morning the complicated controls in the shower-stall defeated her:

she couldn’t make the water come hot. In the end she just filled the hand-basin as usual and splashed her face and neck. There was a sliver of soap left, and she rubbed some into her hair and plunged her head under the water. Her bath-servants would have used shampoo, lotions, salves, conditioners, all sorts of pleasant-smelling balms; but they were all dead, and the rack.
upon rack of bottles in the walk-in bathroom cabinet intimidated Freya.
Faced with so much choice, she chose to use nothing.

At least she had worked out how to dress herself. She picked up one of her crumpled gowns from the floor, laid it on the bed and burrowed into it from the bottom, struggling about inside until she got her arms and head out through the right holes. The long, fur-trimmed waistcoat which went over the gown was much easier to put on, but she had a lot of trouble with the buttons. Her handmaidens had always done up her buttons very quickly and easily, talking and laughing about the day ahead and never, ever getting a button through the wrong hole; but they were all dead.

Comments
Kira Beaumont woke from an uneasy sleep. Something had changed. She swung her legs from the bed and fumbled for the light switch. The red carpeted floor of her father’s huge cabin appeared between her feet. Kira stared at it, stretching her large eyes even wider, waiting for a clear head. She nodded slowly. That was it. Motor yacht Ithaca, a hydrofoil the size of a small ship, was on the move. Her twin engines were sending little tremors up through the bed. But why? They had dropped anchor for the night, and a glance at the porthole told Kira that it was still dark. She turned to the bedside table and swivelled the clock to face her. Dawn was near. Beneath the clock was a thick, leather-bound book, embossed with gold letters. She stared involuntarily at the old volume. Her childhood favourite, that her father had read to her until every page was dog-eared. 20,000 Leagues under the Sea, by Jules Verne. The bleached stone walls of the Cyprus ‘cottage’ passed before her.
eyes. Kira put her hand on the book. As far back as she could remember, its epic images had mingled in her imagination with her father’s true life sea stories.

After another American billionaire’s child was almost kidnapped, her father had abandoned their ancestral mansion in Baltimore, choosing instead to raise Kira in the safety of his remote Cyprus hideaway. Though grief now made them painful to revive, she would always treasure those memories; balmy Mediterranean evenings filled with her father’s enthusiastic storytelling, and halcyon days of swimming and snorkelling with him in rocky coves of shallow, turquoise water. Dad had sometimes joked that the sea itself was little Kira’s other parent. Now his child was an adult, and in virtual hiding, floating again in her foster mother’s endless blue lap.

Comments
### A framework for assessing narrative writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Register variable</th>
<th>Low range text</th>
<th>Mid range text</th>
<th>High range text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of field of narrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot</td>
<td>Too many or too few activity sequences for plot development</td>
<td>Activity sequences packaged appropriate to plot</td>
<td>Activity sequences used to point up significance of plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterisation</td>
<td>Generalised participants</td>
<td>Specific participants</td>
<td>Individualised participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Limited range of circumstances of time and place</td>
<td>Unambiguous creation of circumstances relevant to setting</td>
<td>Evocative use of circumstances to build up significance of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'World creating vocabulary'</td>
<td>General vocabulary</td>
<td>Vocabulary appropriate to 'possible world'</td>
<td>Use of discriminating and evocative vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of tenor of narrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation of characters</td>
<td>Flat treatment of characters and events</td>
<td>Limited focus on characters’ needs and motives</td>
<td>Animated sustained treatment of needs and motives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point(s) of view</td>
<td>Presentation of limited range of viewpoints</td>
<td>Introduction of range of viewpoints relevant to plot</td>
<td>Careful management of viewpoints important to plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary devices</td>
<td>Little or no use of literacy devices to build humour, suspense or point</td>
<td>Experimenting with literacy devices to build humour, suspense or narrative point</td>
<td>Sophisticated use of literary devices to underscore humour, suspense or narrative point</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Development of written mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signposting</th>
<th>Limited use of signposting to guide reader through each stage of narrative</th>
<th>Adequate use of signposting to guide reader through each stage of narrative</th>
<th>Interesting and varied use of signposting to guide reader through each stage of narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence logic</td>
<td>Loosely co-ordinated single clause sentences</td>
<td>Integrating clauses within sentences</td>
<td>Use of compound and complex sentences to interrelate events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking and expanding messages</td>
<td>Use of limited range of mostly additive connectives to link messages</td>
<td>Use of range of temporal and causal connectives to link messages</td>
<td>Use of full range of logical connectives to link messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Ambiguous or faulty reference to participants</td>
<td>Accurate presentation and tracking of participants</td>
<td>Control of a wide range of referential ties to participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ref: Dr Mary Macken-Horak, University of Canberra
(Please attach to all student writing samples)

Student name ........................................................................................................................................ Date ........................................

School ................................................................................................................................................ Year level ........................................

Text being studied: ................................................................................................................................

Curriculum Framework Level .............................................................................................................

Was this a teacher-directed writing task? Yes □ No □

What preparation was done by the teacher? (Modelling, joint construction, prepared charts of words, phrases, prompts on board or verbally)

What was the context? What was the student asked to do?

Did the student receive assistance with spelling? Yes □ No □ (Describe assistance.)

- Through teacher/tutor intervention ........................................................................................................

- Words displayed on board or charts ....................................................................................................

Have structures or techniques from the studied texts been used in this piece of writing? Yes □ No □

Was the student directed to use these structures or techniques? Yes □ No □
(Please attach to each writing sample)

Student name ................................................................................................................. Date ...................................

School ............................................................................................................................... Year level ...................................

Text being studied: .............................................................................................................

Curriculum Framework Level ..........................................................................................

What preparation did the teacher do? (Modelling, joint construction, prepared charts of words, phrases, prompts on board or verbally)

........................................................................................................................................

What was the context? What was the student asked to do?

........................................................................................................................................

Did the student receive assistance with spelling? Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, circle/describe assistance provided:

• teacher/tutor intervention
• words displayed on board or charts.

Have writing techniques or other language choices taught from the studied text been used in this writing sample? (See table) Some suggestions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing technique</th>
<th>Taught</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Other language choices</th>
<th>Taught</th>
<th>Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreshadowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pacing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flashback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptions:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imagery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensory appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expansions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Analogy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noun groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contrast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit verbs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Metaphor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughts/feelings/reactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building suspense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence beginnings (Theme)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Word recognition and spelling checklist

Student name

Date

Year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Out of context</th>
<th>In context</th>
<th>Read to</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Early reader checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early reading skill</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can the student point to the words as he/she reads? (1:1 correspondence)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the student know where to start reading and which direction to point across the line of print?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the student notice discrepancies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the student have a self-correction strategy (such as re-reading)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the student identify words in context?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the student identify words out of context?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the student identify words when the teacher reads them?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the students name the initial letter of known words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the students state the initial sound of known words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the student write initial letters of known words?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the student spell known words correctly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---
The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University.

**Practitioner Guide**

This guide on the assessment procedures required by teachers participating in the National Accelerated Literacy Program provides relevant information for:
- classroom practitioners
- principals
- school based co-coordinators
- program co-coordinators/consultants.

It provides information about:
- what is being assessed
- the purpose of each assessment procedure
- who needs to be assessed and how often
- how to administer the assessment procedure
- what the results of the assessment mean.

**Guides**

- The guides have been written for teachers who have attended professional development in teaching Accelerated Literacy. The notes presume some understanding about how to teach the program.
- For a detailed explanation of how to implement the teaching sequence, please refer to the teachers’ handouts from the professional development sessions. Additionally, you could refer to http://www.nalp.edu.au

The National Accelerated Literacy Program is jointly funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Education and Training, and supported by Charles Darwin University.