



An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement Professional Learning Module

Narrator's Script



This symbol indicates a special note for the leader, as well as a point to stop for discussion.

TO BEGIN, select Main Presentation on the DVD Menu; the file will begin running immediately and automatically advance through the presentation except where indicated in the script. You also have the ability to pause at any point during the presentation.

Flash Frame

1

Welcome to the Observation Survey professional learning module.

2

This leader-directed training is designed to supplement a careful reading of Marie M. Clay's book, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*. Marie Clay, a New Zealand developmental psychologist, constructed the tasks of the survey in research studies — tasks with established reliability and validity. The Observation Survey is a tool for planned systematic observation to capture evidence of early progress in literacy learning.

3

The Observation Survey is intended for teachers — classroom teachers, specialist teachers, pre-service teachers, and professionals who work individually with children having temporary difficulties with literacy learning. The book is also for administrators who want to monitor the progress of individual children, and for researchers who want to explore how young children learn to read and write using valid and reliable measurement tasks.

4

Training should precede use of the Observation Survey. In order to ensure a standard administration of each task, observers must carefully follow the procedures provided in the Observation Survey book.

5

The Observation Survey is particularly useful for observing young children up to 8 years of age. Because each child begins literacy learning with unique personal knowledge, teachers must assess literacy behaviors across several dimensions of learning.

6

The six tasks of the Observation Survey provide comprehensive information about what a child can do. Individual tasks typically assess only one aspect of literacy learning and should not be used in isolation. Running records of text reading are an exception and can be used on a regular basis to monitor changes in the ways that children use information while reading.

7

All tasks of the Observation Survey are based on sensitive and systematic observations that require objective recording of exactly what a child does on each task. The individual tasks are not designed to predict literacy performance or establish some arbitrary criteria for whether a child is ready to begin literacy learning. Unlike standardized tests that assess the outcomes of instruction, Observation Survey tasks provide information about a child's current performance — information needed to design effective instruction. The tasks are like the ones a child is actually undertaking in the classroom and uncover what a child already knows and can do, and what he or she might need to learn next. Survey tasks yield rich information for screening, intervening, and monitoring a child's progress over time.

8

Observation Survey tasks are derived from a theory of how children come to read and write continuous texts. Emphasis is on the mental activities initiated by the child to get messages from a text or to put messages into a written text.

9

This professional learning module begins with a brief overview of each task, followed by two administration videos. The module also includes a discussion of scoring and analyzing the results in order to write an Observation Survey summary for a child.

10

There is no required order of task administration. This module begins with the Concepts About Print task. Children enter school having had different personal experiences with print. The Concepts About Print task reveals what a child already knows about print — including such concepts as book orientation, letter, word, first, last, and punctuation. Also revealed are control of directional movements and awareness of the sequential order needed for attending to print.

11

The observer reads any one of four specially designed books and invites the child to help by responding to questions about various features of the text.

12

The Concepts About Print task is most useful during the first 2 years of school. The task reveals what the child understands and notices in relation to print. It allows the teacher to monitor change in the child's control of print concepts over time and to identify children who need more opportunities to handle and explore books and listen to stories while looking at print.

13

The Letter Identification task is designed to find out which alphabetic symbols a child can identify — by name, or by sound, or by giving a word that starts with the letter or sound. A correct response using any one of these options shows that the child can identify the letter in some way. This task allows the observer to get a quick record of known and unknown letters and any confusions between letters — serving as a guide for subsequent teaching.

14

The Word Reading task reveals the extent to which a child is building a reading vocabulary of frequently used words. The Clay Word Reading Task is used in Canada and the Ohio Word Test in the United States. Both versions have three word lists from which to choose; alternative lists are used for re-assessment. Word lists are included in the Observation Survey book.

15

The Writing Vocabulary task provides information about a child's current control of a basic writing vocabulary. The child is encouraged to write words that are already known — beginning with his or her name.

This allows the child to write not only what has been taught, but also what has been learned from personal experience. The task also provides insights about a child's attention to print features. The child is given 10 minutes to complete the task. The intent is to learn what children can write—not what they can remember and write—so prompts are provided for the observer to use when necessary; suggesting words or, for more-able writers, categories of words that the child might know how to write.

16

The observation task for Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words captures the child's control of sound-to-letter links. After reading a sentence or two, the observer repeats the message one word at a time, asking the child to write each word. As needed, the child is prompted to say the word slowly, think about what he can hear, and find letters to represent the sounds. The child gets credit for each phoneme analyzed and recorded correctly. The task provides an indication of change over time in how a child represents spoken words in written form and the role that sound analysis plays in this process. The observer may select from five alternative forms for ongoing assessment.

17

All too often, children's progress in learning to read is measured only by testing the number of letters, or sounds, or words they know. But children don't need to know all letters and sounds before engaging with text reading and writing. Supported by their knowledge of stories and control of oral language structures, beginning readers engage successfully with texts constructed out of letters, sounds, and words — and learn more about these elements as they read and write.

18

Running Records of Text Reading are taken as a child reads orally from a text that the observer expects the child will be able to read. Using standard recording conventions, the observer captures exactly what the child says and does while reading the text. These behaviors can be analyzed to give direction to the teacher for further instruction. Information gathered from running records can be used to assess text difficulty for a particular child, group children for instruction, guide teaching, identify useful problem-solving behaviors, and demonstrate change over time in individual students.

19

Detailed procedures for taking running records of text reading are beyond the scope of this module. A three-part professional learning package is available from the Reading Recovery Council of North America to accompany Chapter 5 in the Observation Survey book or Marie Clay's book, *Running Records for Classroom*

Teachers. The three-part package focuses on the procedures for taking and scoring running records, analyzing the records, and using running records to make teaching decisions. A minimum of three training sessions are recommended before beginning to use this important assessment task.

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You will now watch two administrations of the Observation Survey. We recommend that you observe both administrations to examine the behaviors of two beginning first graders. One is at ease with literacy learning and the other is experiencing some literacy challenges.

21

As you observe the first administration, focus on the administration procedures and Mironna's responses to each task. Only one of Mironna's running records of text reading will be shown. Running record score sheets for the entire administration will be provided later.



VIDEO OF ADMINISTRATION WITH MIRONNA; PRESENTATION STOPS

You may want the group to discuss the administration of the survey with Mironna at this time.

Click next or use right arrow to advance frame when you are ready to resume.

22

During the administration, Tina carefully recorded what Mironna said and did. She then followed the detailed scoring procedures set out in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* to get reliable scores for each task — and to learn how to interpret the scores.

23

During the administration of the Concepts About Print task, Tina used a check mark for correct responses and a dot for incomplete or incorrect responses.

24

Specific observations about behaviors were recorded in the comment column. After the administration, Tina used pages 44 to 47 in the Observation Survey book to check responses against scoring standards.

25

In the upper right corner, Tina recorded the test score and the stanine group. The stanine provides a guide for comparing Mironna's score with a sample of her peers. National stanine tables for Canada and the U.S. are provided in the Observation Survey book for three times during the school year. Mironna's Concepts About Print score was 17—or stanine 6—in Canada and the U.S. for children at the beginning of Grade 1.

26

During the administration of the Letter Identification task, Tina recorded Mironna's responses. Note that the top row allowed Tina to check if the response was 'A' for alphabet, 'S' for letter sound, 'Word' for a word beginning with the letter, or 'I.R.' for an incorrect response.

27

After the administration, Tina recorded confusions, unknown letters, and comments. She wrote the task score of 53 and stanine group 7 in the top right corner.

28

During the administration of the Word Reading Test, Tina put a check mark beside each correct response and a dot for no response. Incorrect responses would be recorded beside the word. Note that Tina recorded some observations at the bottom of the page. With a score of 9 words, Mironna's stanine group was 5.

29

During the administration of the Writing Vocabulary task, Tina recorded her observations and Mironna's responses on a separate sheet of paper. After the administration, Tina used the detailed procedures in the Observation Survey book to score Mironna's written responses. For incorrect spellings, Tina recorded the intended word beneath Mironna's response. Mironna's 26 correctly spelled words put her in stanine group 6.

30

As Tina observed Mironna during the administration of the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task, she again made notes on a separate sheet of paper. After the task was completed, Tina wrote the text below the child's version for words without standard spelling. She then consulted the scoring guide on page 121 in the Observation Survey book. No set of rules for scoring will cover all the possibilities in children's attempts, but this guide will help to achieve reliable results. Mironna's score on the Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words task was 32 — or stanine group 6 in the U.S. and stanine group 7 in Canada.

31

As explained earlier, the Running Record of Text Reading task is beyond the scope of this learning module. But running records yield crucial information about the learner. They capture how a beginning reader is putting together what he or she knows in order to read text. What sources of information is the child using or neglecting when reading continuous text? For purposes of this module, we will highlight some of the information Tina was able to gain about Mironna's reading of continuous text.

32

On running record sheets, Tina used standard conventions to record what Mironna said. She wrote a comment about how the reading sounded. Mironna read the book *Climbing* with 100% accuracy, indicating that it was easy for her to read. There were no errors or self-corrections for Tina to analyze.

33

Mironna's accuracy rate for *Princess Pig and Marvin* was 91% — an instructional level. Tina analyzed errors and self-corrections to see what kinds of information Mironna used and neglected while reading this text.

34

Mironna read the book *The Bumper Cars* with 89% accuracy, indicating that the book was likely difficult for her to read. Again, Tina analyzed errors and self-corrections. For each running record text, Tina indicated the book level. Teachers will use a book leveling system appropriate to their professional context such as Reading Recovery, guided reading, or district benchmark levels. In addition to text level difficulty, Mironna's running records provided information about her use of meaning, language structure, and visual information as well as self-monitoring, self-correcting, and fluent reading behaviors. To use running records of text reading in reliable and useful ways, several training sessions are needed.

35**OPTIONAL TIME FOR DISCUSSION; PRESENTATION STOPS**

You may choose to take time now to discuss Mironna's score sheets with the group (a likely option for Reading Recovery teacher leaders). Direct the group to the appropriate section of the Participant Guide (Mironna's score sheets for the six tasks).

Click next or use right arrow to advance frame when you are ready to resume.

36

The record sheets for each task of the Observation Survey provide detailed information. To integrate the information into a meaningful summary, teachers will decide which children need a full analysis of their performance across the six tasks of the Observation Survey. For a competent child, the teacher may make notes on teaching points. For children whose progress is puzzling, detailed summaries are called for. Although Mironna's scores may not indicate the need for a detailed summary, we will use her records to demonstrate the preparation of a complete Observation Survey summary. Chapter 10 in the Observation Survey book serves as a guide for summarizing Observation Survey results.

37

At the top of side 1 of the Observation Survey Summary Sheet, Tina transferred the detail from the running records obtained at three levels of difficulty including the analysis of information used and neglected, made a notation about directional movement, and described how the reading sounded.

38

Then Tina recorded the results for the other five observation tasks on the lower half of side 1. In addition to entering the score and stanine group, she summarized her observations for each task.

39

On side 2 of the Observation Survey Summary Sheet, Tina analyzed Mironna's strengths as well as how she worked on problems or new challenges. Using all six tasks, she analyzed the child's useful and problem strategic activity on text, with words, and with letters. The questions on pages 133–135 in the Observation Survey book provide guidance for completing this analysis. Tina objectively used only the evidence from the Observation Survey tasks. The summary is not about what the child needs but rather about the child's current competencies — based on *this* administration of the survey.

40

Because Mironna's Observation Survey tasks yielded scores in stanine group 5 or higher for the beginning of Grade 1, Tina may have chosen to write a shorter summary. On the other hand, consider how much Tina knows now about Mironna's current competencies. Useful questions to guide classroom practice for Mironna are found on pages 138 and 139 in the Observation Survey book.

41**SESSION BREAK or DISCUSSION OF MIRONNA'S OBSERVATION SURVEY SUMMARY; PRESENTATION STOPS**

If you've not already done so, you may want to take time to discuss Mironna's score sheets in the Participant Guide. Then take time to discuss the Observation Survey Summary Sheet for Mironna which is also in the Participant Guide. You may also wish to schedule a break at this time.

Click next or use right arrow to advance frame when you are ready to resume.

42

Now, watch as Betsy administers the Observation Survey to Candra, also a beginning first grader. Again, only part of the Running Records of Text Reading task will be shown, but all record sheets will be provided later. At the end of this module, take time to examine Candra's record sheets for each observation task. Working with your leader and your colleagues, you will complete an Observation Survey Summary Sheet for Candra in order to pull together the information from all tasks.



VIDEO OF ADMINISTRATION WITH CANDRA — Encourage participants to observe the video without referring to the score sheets.

NOTE—PRESENTATION DOES NOT STOP AFTER VIDEO

43

Betsy continued to take running records of Candra's text reading. You will see all of the analyzed records at the conclusion of this learning module when you prepare an Observation Survey Summary Sheet for Candra.

44

You will also want to take time to read Chapter 11 in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* and discuss ways these systematic observations can guide the literacy learning of individual children.

45

This professional learning module has provided an overview of the Observation Survey tasks. Additional training and experience will be needed to administer, score, and interpret the results in reliable ways. Discussing your observations with colleagues allows you to test your understandings against the information in the Observation Survey book.

46

All teachers observe individual children in classrooms and in other educational settings, but the Observation Survey is a tool for planned systematic observations to capture evidence of early progress. For children having difficulty learning to read, unhelpful behaviors can become habituated and resistant to change. When administered no later than 1 year after a child enters school—generally at the beginning of Grade 1—the Observation Survey ensures early detection of difficulties and provides information to support an early intervention for some children.

47

Reading Recovery teachers, for example, rely on systematic observation to design and deliver daily individual lessons to supplement a child's classroom literacy program.

48

As you give the Observation Survey to more children and discuss the results with colleagues, you will become proficient in observing the rapid changes in early literacy learning reflected in these tasks. You can observe how children differ from one another and how individuals transition into literacy learning in different ways. You will observe change over time in a child's literacy learning. These tasks may also reveal strengths in classroom programs and areas that may need additional attention.

49

Enjoy the challenge of learning to take a closer look at children as they learn to read and write — and using your observations to guide your teaching decisions.

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ENDNOTES (transition music)

Content for this professional learning module was created by the Teaching and Professional Development Committee of the North American Trainers Group. Permission to include pages from the book, *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* third edition, was granted by the Marie Clay Literacy Trust, copyright holder of all Marie Clay titles. Published by Pearson New Zealand, the book is distributed in the U.S. by Heinemann and in Canada by Pearson. This module was produced by the Reading Recovery Council of North America. Copyright 2013.

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Also available from RRCNA is the Record of Oral Language professional learning module. Participants learn to administer, score, and use the results of a child's recorded language behaviors through video examples of concepts described in the book, full administrations of the Record of Oral Language with two students, and additional examples for deeper learning. All RRCNA professional development modules — including the 3-part Running Record Professional Learning Package — are available at the online RRCNA Store. Visit www.readingrecovery.org/onlinestore today.



AFTER THE DVD ENDS, guide the group in examining Candra's score sheets for all tasks as they collaborate to complete an Observation Survey Summary Sheet. Everyone will need the Participant Guide that includes a blank copy of the summary sheet. Encourage participants to write the summary before looking at the one provided on the last two pages of the Participant Guide.