



# **PART 1 – Assessment**

*This section is intended to guide teachers through a process to gather additional assessment information to inform programming for students requiring additional support in reading.*

The assessment process

Flowchart

Accuracy and fluency measure

Instructional level texts

Comprehension measure

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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# The assessment process

See flow chart on page 11.

All schools are encouraged to access their SMART data for students in stage 2 and above prior to administering any individual assessments. The data provides detailed analysis of performance for every student on each test item on the national assessment. This can be used to identify aspects of reading underperformance of individuals, groups of students and the cohort.

Conducting an *Individual Reading Assessment* provides teachers with additional assessment information to inform planning and programming. It assists teachers to identify an instructional level of text for each student, to assess reading comprehension, and to assess essential skills of decoding, phonemic awareness and high frequency word reading knowledge.

The information gathered by class teachers and/or Support Teachers Learning Assistance (STLA) provides the specific information about student needs required to program effectively to improve student outcomes.

The same assessment measures used to inform programming can also be used to monitor student progress on target skills to ensure the additional support being provided is making a difference and students' are making adequate progress.

## Step 1

### Learning Support Team referral

In a whole school prevention and intervention approach to students experiencing difficulties with reading, all students requiring an *Individual Reading Assessment* would be referred by the schools learning support team (LST).

An important first step in the assessment process is to consider all available student assessment, LST, or class teacher information, including language and cultural background. This will inform the assessment process for each student.

## Step 2

### Accuracy and fluency measure

Select an initial text for assessment and administer an oral reading accuracy and fluency measure. Refer to page 12 for information on how to do this.

Determine if the student meets oral reading accuracy and fluency criteria. Results of this measure need to be interpreted in the context of the student's experiences with English and learning in English. This decision should be made at the end of a one minute read and based on the following reading rates. (Neal 1990)

Year 3      80-100 correct per minute with fewer than 3 errors

Year 5+    100-120 correct per minute with fewer than 3 errors

If the student does not meet the criteria, stop the reading of this text, select an easier level text and proceed with determining oral reading accuracy and fluency scores.

Observe and record all reading strategies demonstrated. This will inform instructional planning.

Proceed to Step 3 Comprehension measure, after an *independent* level of text has been identified for use.

### **Step 3**

#### **Comprehension measure**

After the student has completed the oral reading fluency assessment, administer the comprehension measure to determine student understanding of the text. Allow the student time to read the text silently before administering the 'Text questions'. The text should remain accessible to the student while the understanding component is being completed.

Determine if further assessment tasks need to be undertaken.

### **Step 4**

#### **Specific level assessment**

Select further specific level assessment tasks after analysis of the student's text reading performance. If the student does not meet stage level criteria of accuracy, fluency or understanding administer the following specific level assessments:

1. Educcheck *Neal Phonemic Skills Screening Test* (Neal, D. 1988) or another decoding skills test.
2. *Johnson Basic Vocabulary* or another sight word test. Other suitable high frequency word banks include Bookwords, M100 Words, for students in stage 1 and Multilit for students in stage 2 and above.
3. *Sutherland Phonological Awareness Test* (Neilson 1995) or another phonemic awareness test, for students in stages 1–3.
4. *Phonological Assessment for Older Students* or another phonemic awareness test, for students in stage 4 and 5.

### **Step 5**

#### **Planning and programming**

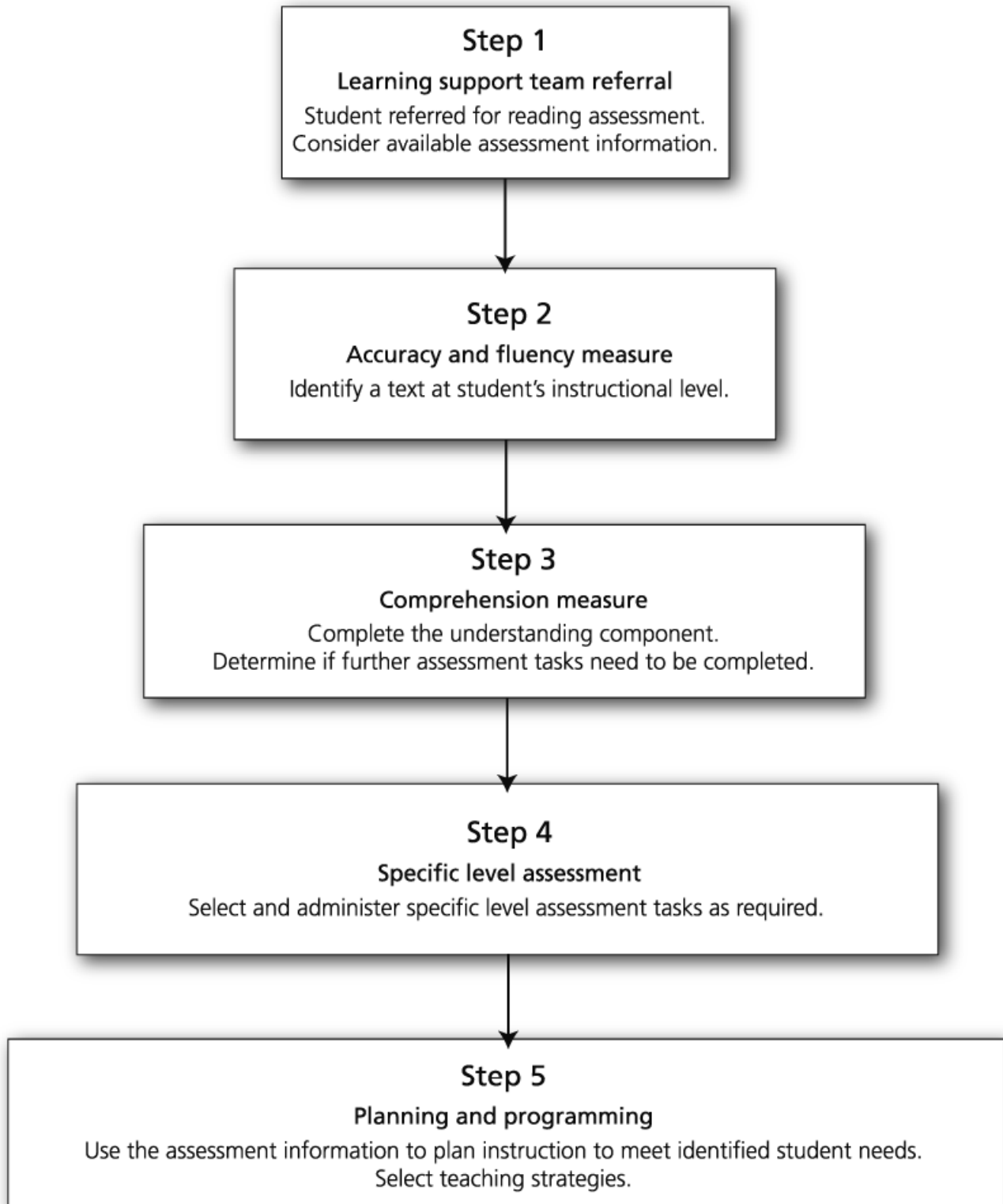
Complete the *Individual reading assessment: Student summary sheet*.

The learning support team, in conjunction with class teachers, uses the assessment information to determine priorities and plan appropriate additional support for students.

See Part 2 *After assessment* which details a range of effective teaching strategies for providing additional support to students.

## The assessment process

### Flowchart



# Accuracy and fluency measure

## Instructions

### Purpose

- To identify an instructional and independent level of text.
- To identify a text to use for measuring student understanding.
- To observe student use of strategies when reading.
- To determine whether a student's difficulty in reading is related to problems in accuracy or fluency.

Materials needed:

- teacher's copy of selected texts
- student's copy of selected texts
- stopwatch
- tape recorder (optional).

### Procedure

- Administer the assessment on an individual basis.
- Do not allow the student to preview the passage prior to the one-minute read.
- Point to the passage and say, "I want you to read this story aloud. Read it as quickly and carefully as you can. Have a go at any words that you're not sure of. As you read, if you need help with a word I will give it to you."
- Start timing as the student reads the first word.
- Mark the last word read at the end of one minute, but allow the student to continue reading to the end of the passage. This provides additional reading behaviour information for analysis. Passage completion will also allow the student to later demonstrate understanding.
- Where possible correct errors as the student reads the text.

### Recording

- Record all information on the teacher's copy.
- Underline words read incorrectly and/or record student response above the word.
- Circle words not attempted. These are counted as errors. If no attempt is made at a word within 3 seconds (during the minute read), supply the word and direct the student to continue.
- Words that are misread but then corrected are not counted as errors. Indicate this by placing sc (self correction) above the word and recording it in the SC column.
- Count any extra words or insertions as errors, even if they make sense.

## Scoring

- Count the number of words read correctly within the minute read to calculate the fluency measure. This is recorded as the number of words read correctly in one minute (cwpm).
- Record the accuracy measure as a percentage. This is calculated as the number of words read correctly over the total number of words attempted in one minute, multiplied by 100.
- Calculate the student's use of self-correction.
- See table below for more information about calculating oral text reading accuracy, fluency and self correction.

### Oral text reading

#### Calculating accuracy, fluency and self-correction

#### Accuracy

To calculate a student's oral reading accuracy:

1. Count the total number of words read.
2. Count the number of errors made.
3. Subtract the number of errors from the total words read to find the total number of words read *correctly*.
4. Divide the number of correct words read correctly by the total number of words read.

For example:  $100 \text{ words read} - 6 \text{ errors} = 94$   
 $\frac{94}{100} = 94\% \text{ accuracy}$

#### Fluency

To calculate a student's oral reading fluency:

1. Time the student's oral reading for one minute.
2. Count the number of words read.
3. Subtract the number of errors made from the number words read to find the correct words per minute (cwpm).

For example: A total of 85 words read – 3 errors = 82 cwpm

#### Self-correction

To calculate a student's use of self-correction strategies:

1. Add the total number of errors and total number of self-corrections together.
2. Divide this total by the number of self-corrections.

For example: A student makes 6 errors and demonstrates 3 self-corrections  
 $\frac{6 + 3}{3} = \frac{9}{3} = 1:3 \text{ self-corrections}$

## Instructional level texts

An instructional level is one where a student reads 90-95% of the words correctly. If a student is below 90% accuracy, it will not be possible to gain useful information about the strategies a student uses whilst reading or their level of understanding when reading a text. The student may be so focused on working out individual words that she/he may not be able to attend to what the text is about. An instructional level text is used for instructional purposes but an *independent* level of text read with age appropriate fluency needs to be found in order to assess comprehension.

*Independent level text:* a student reads above 95% of words correctly

*Instructional level text:* a student reads 90-95% of words correctly

*Frustration level text:* a student reads below 90% of words correctly

# Comprehension measure

Comprehension is the ultimate goal of the reading process. Questions should explore the student's understanding of the text. The text used to measure understanding should be at read by the students at an *independent* level.

Prior to administering the 'Text questions' component of the reading assessment, ensure that the student had the opportunity to reread the text silently with the knowledge that questions will be asked on completion. The questions should be asked orally and the students should supply an oral response. Students should be encouraged to refer to the text for answers.

The three level guide format (Morris & Stewart-Dore 1984) is used as the design of the understanding component of the reading assessment. Text questions are divided into three types according to how readers need to activate their background knowledge.

## Type 1 – Literal level

*Textually explicit questions* require readers to locate relevant information directly from the text. The wording of the statements may not always be exactly the same as in the text but the meaning is similar. This requires literal level comprehension and can be expressed as

- Reading *on* the lines or
- Right there or
- The author *said* it.

When students understand texts at the literal level they are able to:

- locate information directly stated in a text
- locate information in titles, headings and captions
- connect information in a text and a labelled diagram
- make connections between information in consecutive sentences.

## Type 2 – Interpretive level

*Textually implicit questions* require readers to reflect on literal information and see relationships between statements. They require students to think and search for answers. This is interpretive level comprehension and can be expressed as

- Reading *between* the lines or
- Think and search or
- The author *meant* it.

When students understand texts at the interpretive level they are able to:

- sequence events from a text
- identify a symbol by reading a key for a map
- extract information from maps, diagrams and visual images
- make connections in a text by following a pronoun reference.

### **Type 3 – Inferential level**

*Scriptually explicit questions* require readers to apply and evaluate information by relating it to their own background knowledge. This is applied level comprehension and can be expressed as

- Reading *beyond* the lines or
- On my own or
- The author *would agree with* it.

When students understand texts at the inferential level they are able to:

- presume information implied in a text
- deduce the main idea from key words
- identify the meaning of words using context clues
- identify the meaning of figurative language, eg a metaphor.

Student responses to the three levels of questioning along with their semantic knowledge will provide useful information, regarding their understanding of written text, to inform programming.