



Perspectives

Issue 2, 2003

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Editorial

In my capacity as itinerant support teacher-learning difficulties, I am often asked how to improve the performance of students. I then make my suggestions that are frequently ignored, put in the too-hard basket or grudgingly accepted, adapted or modified. Giving advice is cheap. It often leads to disappointment for the giver because inevitably the advice does not accord with the working paradigm of the receiver. It was after thinking about the latest plea for 'assistance' that a wonderful thought struck me. "Why don't we collect data and, to use a cliché, let it do the talking".

Now I know for the majority of you this is not a revelation, but it does seem to be for many teachers. Assessment, discussion and moderation ought to be our stock in trade. Teachers in classrooms frequently work in isolation. If we can provide a way of their being involved in the mutual sharing of information, students will be the beneficiaries of this process.

What do we mean when we talk about assessment and evaluation? A definition from the Illinois Department of Education: *Assessment is the collection of data about students' performance in order to inform instruction. Evaluation is the interpretation of the data collected.*

The following are the opening paragraphs to a chapter written on assessment and evaluation by Regie Routman in 'Conversations-Strategies for Teaching, Learning and Evaluating', Heinemann 2000. They encapsulate the importance of assessment in school.

I once heard a principal say, *parents don't test their children; they observe them and interact with them.* When we say to parents, *Tell me about your child,* and they do, we don't ask them, *What test did you give to get that information?* We accept the parents' observations.

We know that they have had ongoing experiences with the child, that they know and love their child well, and that they therefore have valuable information to share.

So too, as teachers, we have ongoing experiences with our students, know them well, care about them. As we carefully observe them and talk with them each day, analyse records and notes taken in various contexts, and support them in their work and self-assessments, we obtain valuable information for teaching and goal setting. Then as their parents do, we obtain meaningful assessments to guide our teaching. Such classroom-based assessment does not mean that we do not use standardised measures, which can be appropriate and necessary. It does mean, however, that the overwhelming majority of our assessments and evaluations occur in day-to-day work of the rich literacy classroom.

It is interesting that while the usual meaning of assessment has to do with the collection of data, the term is a derivative of *assidere*, a Latin word meaning to sit beside someone. And therein lies its essence. By sitting next to the child, we observe his strengths and weaknesses, how he thinks and solves problems, how he performs simple and complex tasks. But observation is not enough. Unless we summarise and interpret these data, use them to make professional judgements, and take actions that improve teaching and learning, assessment is not especially useful. It is the analysis of data- our notes and observations, the results of various day-to-day assessments- that bring meaning to assessment and make it rise to the level of evaluation. Assessment without evaluation is pointless.

When assessment becomes evaluation, assessment and instruction go hand in hand. Through our daily teaching we observe what the child is doing and

attempting to do, and we determine what it is we need to do to help the child move forward. We accomplish this in our comprehensive literacy program through effective, responsive teaching that uses various approaches and strategies across the disciplines (Routman 2000).

Assessment ought to be a way forward for the child not the measure by which we judge whether a child has passed or failed according to our often mysterious criteria. Routman cautions the reader that 'assessment must serve the learner' and that assessment should become a learning experience that supports and improves instruction.

In the pages of this edition of *Perspectives* is a range of articles of a practical and theoretical nature. They will, I hope rekindle the debate about effective assessment as the centerpiece of an effective teaching cycle. As Support Teachers-Learning Difficulties it is our role to help teachers come to terms with the power of good assessment and evaluation.

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Nelson Mandela wrote: *“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is what we make of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”* Long Walk to Freedom, p.194.

It is in critiquing assessment that we find many opportunities to address inequities in the system. Students are judged by what they can write about a topic, rather than being given a variety of opportunities to demonstrate what they know. Even mathematics, science and practical subjects are assessed with pencil and paper tests.

Add to this, students are judged against a hypothetical norm by standardized statewide assessment at years 3, 5, 7 and soon 9, and you see a system stacked against the student experiencing learning difficulties.

Report cards do not always report in a way that celebrates distance travelled.

A student I work with has greatly improved in his reading. Three years ago he was finding it difficult to read texts at a Reading Recovery level of 7. His parents have worked hard, his teachers have worked hard, but more importantly he has worked hard and he is now reading texts, which are around a year 4 level. This is a great achievement for him.

However, he is in year 7 and has failed the year 7 test. The report card will judge him against his cohort and only in the effort column will he get an A. However, he has worked harder and learned more than any other child in his class. Next year he will enter high school and I

fear for him in a larger system, where he may not show his true abilities, despite some special considerations.

Many of you will have spent time at the end of the year either writing or contributing to the writing of report cards; others of you will have written professional reports on students referred for diagnostic assessment.

As advocates for students experiencing learning difficulties we need to give our children every possible chance to show what they know and then to report it in such a way that it not only gives a positive, clear picture of the pupil’s abilities and achievements, but inspires greater things.

Assessment gives us great power to influence the lives of our students. Remember Uncle Ben’s words: *“with great power comes great responsibility”*.

Have a wonderful Christmas break!!

David Waterworth.

MAKING THE MOST OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT: TABULATING THE RESULTS OF SYSTEMIC TESTS TO REVEAL AREAS OF STUDENT STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

The Education Queensland years 3, 5 and 7 tests have always generated a considerable amount of discussion as to both their merits and their demerits. That debate will no doubt rage on for as long as the tests exist. I decided long ago however, that if they were going to continue to exist then I may as well work with the data to glean some information that the teachers I work with would find useful.

Because the test results arrive late in the year they afford the most information for programming for that particular cohort to the teachers who are going to be teaching them in the following year. Therefore the way the data is presented in class sets doesn't usually help the next year's teacher because the class groupings change. I use an Excel data base to enter the names of the children in columns for each subject area with each child's scaled score entered before their name, eg 650 Joe Bloggs. Once all of the data has been entered for the year level I then use the automatic ranking capability of excel to rank order the children's names by score for the whole group.

These lists are then printed out on A3 so that the whole class group is visible in one view. This way the year 4 and year 6 teachers can go through the lists for the whole year level cohort and highlight the names of the children from their class and see where they come in relation to the group. These full lists are also useful to use in conjunction with the dotted graphs of results to determine how many of the group scored in the bottom 20% or the top 20% and so on. These sheets are very popular with the teachers and they refer to them on many occasions during the year to compare results for individual children.

I also enter all of the percentage correct results into an Excel database, item by item. I use the facilities of Excel to work out percentages correct for the whole year level, and percentages correct for each item by gender. While this sounds complicated it really is a click or two of the mouse. I then graph the results which is also easily done by Excel's auto graphing ability. The performance graphs are then pasted into a blank test booklet item by item and we analyse how our school performed as a whole, and in gender groups, in relation to the state scores.

This analysis then alerts the year three, five and seven teachers as to areas that may need particular attention and also informs the year four and six teachers as to possible areas of strength or weakness for the group of students with whom they are about to work. We have found that this method has allowed us to celebrate good practice and plan to address areas of need. There is a considerable amount of data entry required to get to the point where we are able to do this analysis. The school as a whole prioritises the process and we use generous amounts of aide time to facilitate the data entry. As I write this, I wait in anticipation of the arrival of those boxes of results so the work can begin.

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SO WHAT'S NEW AND OLD IN ASSESSMENT?

Because of the complexity of the academic, social, physical, behavioral, and emotional needs of the students that fall within our ambit of concern it has always been necessary to be aware of assessment practices that enable us to explore the ways and means of representing, explaining, and intervening to mitigate these difficulties and report to colleagues involved in sharing the responsibility for these students (e.g., classroom teachers, speech pathologists, guidance counsellors). In the LANDA (Literacy and Numeracy Diagnostic Assessment) collections for example that were developed during the eighties, an amazing array of devices were gathered to assist Support Teachers collect the fine-grained information necessary to portray the difficulties experienced by students in the areas of literacy and maths.

You may remember or have had occasion to access the maths collection, developed by a highly knowledgeable group including Margaret Toohey that was published and circulated. Copies may still be available for teachers to draw upon the many tools – probes, screening tests, checklists, observation sheets, descriptions of formal tests etc. that could be enlisted according to the discretion of a teacher exploring student needs. These were all linked to a model of assessment and intervention. (See the all important grey book – *Managing Mathematics: Assessing for Planning, Learning and Teaching.*)

The literacy collection was never published because of some philosophical differences but nevertheless the thoughtful, thorough eclectic collection of assessment devices was influential through the ‘underground’ network, providing some wonderfully innovative tools to enable the collection of information central to a diagnostic/intervention model. Many of the approaches to assessment embodied in these tools seem to have been adopted in recent years by classroom teachers, a vital move in these days of inclusive practice.

It seems we have improved in recent years in one important area. This relates to the matching of assessment practices in some areas to the conceptualisation of what good practice is. We’ve learned through research so much more about what works in teaching reading, writing including spelling and maths to name a few areas. Denton, Vaughn & Fletcher (2003) for example in talking about reading research comment,

Research on reading over the last three decades has experienced one of the most dramatic increases in knowledge and understanding in the history of education. As Stanovich (2000) noted, what we know about the essential components of reading is based on converging evidence over time – the hallmark of science... What is remarkable about this body of knowledge is that the accumulation is not only vertical, representing an incremental growth in knowledge, but also horizontal, representing the integration of knowledge across domains of inquiry. Thus, much of the accumulation represents the integration of information across different disciplines: neuroimaging, genetics, cognitive development, and instruction. It is a research base encompassing not only how children learn to read, but why many struggle.

From this perspective, it seems imperative that some types of assessment, for example for screening populations of students for those at-risk for learning disabilities with its variety of manifestations reflect research based practice.

While the technical ‘working’ tools selected may in fact be relatively uncomplicated they need to match our purposes. Important features of formal assessment are delineated by Lipson & Wixson, in their readable text ‘Assessment and Instruction of Reading Disability’. They explain those all-important concepts of validity and reliability referred to by Stephen Mysliwy in the last issue of ‘Perspectives’. Perhaps some of the more complex tools that were considered indispensable for our attention may no longer warrant our attention. We might today consider, for example whether any real benefit accrues from an intellectual assessment. (See for example Siegel 2003). In contrast think for example of the brief mastery tests, *Dibels* referred to us by Sharon Vaughn during her recent visit. These are easily administered measures of early literacy development linking with a solid research base. A wealth of information on standardized assessment is available at the ENC site (Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Science and Mathematics) based at the University of Ohio) <http://www.enc.org/?ls=bc>

Just as important if not more important in the context of the teaching/learning cycle is the use of various formative tools that are integral to our practising model of teaching reading, writing etc. For most teachers this will include regular use of running records, checklists to assist students to reflect on what strategies they are using to comprehend texts, graphs representing growth in reading fluency for particular passages, a list of sight words showing mastery (automaticity) of some words and others at various stages of being mastered in terms of accuracy and speed, samples of work, and a variety of other tools that are congruent with the beliefs and practices of intervention.

As our beliefs and understandings as professional teachers are modified in response to insights from practice and theory, it is logical that our approaches to assessment should be commensurate with our changing perspective. Almasi (2003), for example provides an informative model of how assessment and practice can be meshed in developing reading comprehension. She developed a ‘Good Strategy User Model’ to classify the essential elements of focus that link with strategic processing. These elements relate to the ‘Extent of knowledge base’ (Declarative knowledge, Procedural knowledge, Conditional knowledge), Motivation, Metacognition, Ability to analyse task, Variety of strategies. In her assessment model these are lined along the horizontal axis. Along the vertical axis she has selected assessment practices that enable her to tap these abilities. These are: Observation/conversation, Think aloud protocol, Metacognitive interview/text interview, Miscue analysis, Index of reading awareness, Metacomprehension Strategy Index, Motivation to Read Profile. Having a model of this type could assist teachers to clarify and classify the nature of the information they collect during day-to-day practice. The information collected is congruent with the projected model.

Almasi suggests using a clipboard with index cards arranged so that anecdotal information can be collected from observations and conversations over the course of a day. At the end of the day the information can be summarized on the grid. An intermediate step might be to keep the ‘post-its’ in students’ folders for attention later. Thus an evolving picture can be painted demonstrating student implementation of these comprehension processes and their motivation to do so. Through such an approach, as Almasi points out the observations and conversations can take on diagnostic significance when considered in terms of the theoretical framework, in this case, ‘The Good Strategy User Model’. The informal but structured tools suggested can assist in illuminating and amplifying the anecdotal information collected as a working hypothesis and ensure that even systematically collected ‘snapshots’ are supported and strengthened (or negated) by other assessment practices. These come in the form of interviews, formalized conversations about comprehension processes, Think alouds, miscue analyses, etc. The ‘trick’ seems to be to select the right tools for the job and as skilled professionals that is part of the craft of our role. Two tools of the type used by Almasi are provided

in TIPS. (See the ‘Teacher/student discussion, Research skills checklist).

Taking another look

As we all have experienced there are the occasional students who do not respond readily to our interventions. These typically we would describe as our ‘hard core’ LD students. If we are stumped by the minimal progress of such students, it is worth considering a dynamic assessment approach. Some of the details of this style of assessment have been described previously but are worth reiterating.

Background: Interacting with students to ascertain what can be achieved with assistance

Teaching practice in recent times has emphasised the concept of ‘assisted performance’. Vygotsky, whose work has been particularly influential in guiding thinking about pedagogical practices, uses the term ‘scaffolding’ to describe such a process. He claims that assistance offered to a student who has partially learned a concept or process enables the learner to reach a higher or more complete level of learning. The teacher, through breaking down a task, through modelling what has to be done, etc., provides a structure or ‘scaffolding’ to enable this learning.

The abilities that a student brings to a particular learning task need to be considered in conjunction with task requirements. The teacher offers the minimum amount of assistance but no less than the minimum for a student to be successful.

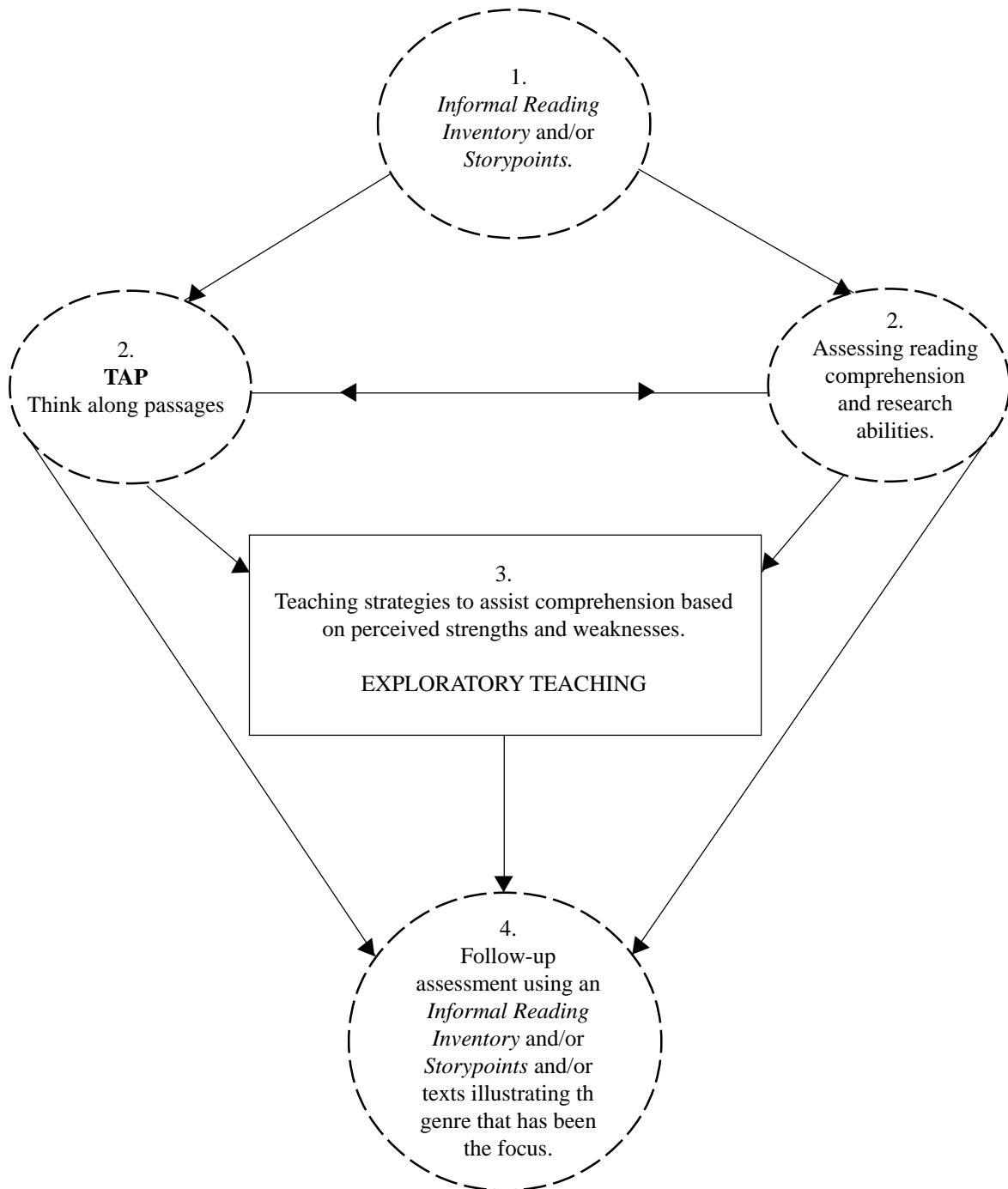
Using an interactive approach to assessment and teaching

The expanded view of the nature of diagnostic information encourages a teacher to assess the abilities a student brings to learning in conjunction with the task requirements. The teacher interacts with the learner in such a way that the learner participates with as little or as much support as is necessary. The teacher offers the minimum amount of assistance to enable a student to successfully complete the task at hand. Through this testing/teaching process, a student should develop knowledge in the following areas:

- Knowledge of a task (that is, a clear understanding of what the task is); how to go about doing this task (procedure); and when and why such a task should be performed, (knowledge, skills and processes necessary to complete a designated task). For example, when required to summarise a textbook chapter for a class project, a student realises that he or she needs to locate the main ideas, and knows how to achieve this. He or she also needs to know that the mastery of other defined skills, knowledge, and processes, needs to be achieved in order for him or her to develop independence when undertaking a particular task.
- The confidence that he or she will be able to do such a task once the requisite knowledge, skills and strategies are learned.
- The social abilities to work with other students to acquire and implement the strategies that are in the process of being learned.

Dynamic assessment is basically a formalization of this process. At its basic level it is test, teach, test approach. The aim of the intervention is to evaluate whether an intervention has potential for assisting this student and to enable a student to be involved in this assessment/ thinking process. The diagram below represents this scaffolded, interactive approach to assess a student’s potential

to avail himself/herself of a particular strategy. In this model, the strategies selected as the choices for exploratory teaching were *Self-questioning using the 3H strategy*, *Imaging*, *Locating main ideas*, *Using story grammar to assist reading and writing*.



A model of dynamic assessment might be applied in other areas of the curriculum, in particular mathematics and writing. In a recent issue of the *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, Berman and Graham (2002) describe a model of dynamic assessment that guidance counsellors might apply in assessing maths.

What's new anyway?

We have all heard of portfolios as a means of assessment but have you heard of digital portfolios? Educators are now considering digital portfolios as a means of mapping student achievements

across a school career or part thereof incorporating various types of media. In a special school, for example this type of assessment could be invaluable in recording the products (photographs) and commentary that a student has compiled over time. It provides a tangible record of achievement that involves a student in the constructing process. Along with criteria, rubrics, and possibly outcomes it provides students with specific feedback on their progress. (This is what you can do now. This is what you could once do.) It provides another means for students to be in charge of their own learning. Clarence High School in Tasmania exemplifies how digital portfolios might be used.

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/ltag/assessment/strategies/clarence.htm>

From 2003, all year 7 students were to be given a portfolio to be carried through to Year 10. Questions needing to be answered by students as part of the adoptive process for this type of assessment include

- *Is it only exemplary work? (that we contribute)*
- *Does it include images and/or video evidence of achievement?*
- *What application will it have for outside-of-school use, such as applying for a job?*

More information about this approach is provided through an experimental group, also in Tasmania involving three schools Edith Creek Primary, Smithton Primary, and Smithton High. Their challenge was to design a template that could be used for K-10 reflecting 'Essential Learnings, key criteria for authentic learning and assessment and would be guided by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Principles'. Initially trialled with five students from each class using collaborative assessment to determine which samples should be included in the portfolio it was observed that certain requirements needed to be in place for the successful implementation of digital portfolios. These are:

- *Using a computer competently*
- *Evaluating their own learning*
- *Setting future directions.*

It was observed that the portfolio provided an opportunity to use a variety of media to demonstrate an achievement.

Teachers incorporated computer generated work samples, scanned copies of student's work, digital photos, PowerPoint presentations, audio clips and short video clips. The range of media available through a Digital Portfolio meant that students could demonstrate their achievements in a meaningful way. eg a video clip of a student taking part in a play has more impact and is a more accurate representation of their ability than a written report.

In Qld digital portfolios are currently be trialled in some schools. For example, Middle Park State School is investigating their use in conjunction with the ICT curriculum and integrating these with Learning Outcomes in SOSE, Health and Physical Education, The Arts and Technology. (See the **TIPS database, Curriculum Exchange Education Qld** and search 'Integrating showcase digital portfolios with the attributes of lifelong learning' or search using 'digital portfolios'.) Many schools recently have made submissions under the umbrella of 'ICT and learning' to attract money for portfolios that meet a variety of purposes. A few of the submissions include input from the ST:LD.

Increasingly educators are looking at the possibilities of the digital portfolio as a means of enhancing the purposeful use of technology and sharing the outcomes of learning with a wider community. Digital portfolios commonly include multimedia presentation of evidence of achievement, and can be stored on laptop computers, zip disks, CD-ROMs or placed on a web server for access by a wide audience.

http://www.icponline.org/feature_articles/f2_00.htm

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- Berman, J. & Graham, L. 'School Counsellor Use of Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment', *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, vol.12, no.1, pp. _.
- Denton, C.A., Vaughn, S. & Fletcher, J.M. 2003, 'Bringing research-based practice in reading intervention to scale', *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp.201 – 211.
- Siegel, L.S. 2003, 'IQ-Discrepancy Definitions and the Diagnosis of LD: Introduction to the Special Issue', *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, vol.36, no. 1, pp.2, 3.

Websites

ICP Online: Digital portfolios, their use in education

http://www.icponline.org/feature_articles/f2_00.htm

Department of Education Tasmania: Assessment

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/ltag/assessment/strategies/clarence.htm>

Official Dibels homepage <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>

'The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills.'

ENC Online <http://www.enc.org/?ls=bc>

Standardized Assessment <http://www.enc.org/topics/assessment/testing/>

See in particular: Standardized test scores and alternative assessments: Different pieces of the same puzzle

<http://www.enc.org/topics/assessment/testing/document.shtm?input=FOC-001558-index>

Assessment Terms:

Authentic assessment is linked to a teaching and learning program that seeks to provide contextual tasks in a supportive environment so that the learner can be given feedback about their progress.

Portfolios are focussed and methodical collections of selected student or teacher work samples, products, reflective journals, performances, achievements and assessments gathered over time. They may reflect agreed criteria for selection of representative samples and may include input from teachers, parents, peers and members of the wider community. Portfolios may be used for evaluation purposes or for sharing as a record of student achievement.

REFERENCES:

Department of Education Tasmania: Assessment

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/ltag/assessment/terms/terms.htm>

Michael Boyle

READING ASSESSMENT - GETTING THE BEST OUT OF OUR TOOLS

The following is an article is from the myread.org website, an Australian website established through federal government grants devoted to the teaching of reading. This article is included to show the quality of material available. This is just one of a series of articles about the assessment of reading. Evaluation and criteria sheets mentioned are available through hotlinks on the website: www.website.org

The following is information about reading assessment, much of it is very familiar. I have included it because it illustrates the main purpose of assessment , that is to gather information . The enhanced value of this information gathering occurs when the data is discussed with colleagues or parents, or even the children themselves. The value of this information does not lie in its standardisation but in engagement with actual pieces of a child's reading and the observations taken. The conversation that then takes place will point the way forward and plans for constructive instruction can take place.

Analysis of Reading Strategies

Analysis of Reading Strategies is an individualised assessment that was developed initially by Ken Goodman. It provides in-depth information about what strategies a reader is using and helps to identify areas that need attention for reading to develop. Max Kemp's work which draws on both Goodman and Marie Clay is perhaps more widely known in Australia.

Reading-with-Understanding Running Record

An alternative to Analysis of Reading Strategies that is widely used with younger readers is the Running Record devised by Marie Clay. An adaptation of the Running Record was developed for use with older readers in New Zealand for the SARR (Supporting At-Risk readers) project. Older readers need to be assessed on their ability to read silently as well as their ability to read aloud.

Gaelene Rowe, Helen Lamont, May Daly, Debra Edwards & Sarah Mayor Cox, authors of *Success with Reading & Writing: helping at-risk students 8-13 years*, (2000), have kindly given us permission to include information about a Reading-with-Understanding Running Record from their book. Examples of completed Reading-with-Understanding Running Record sheets are included in their text.

Reading and Writing Assessment

Reading Assessment

A teacher needs to draw from a range of possible assessment tools in order to identify the aspects of those where a student still needs some support. This section outlines some assessment techniques which are useful for varying purposes.

Example 1: If a student appears not to understand the text material which they can read aloud fluently, a Reading-With-Understanding Running Record would be a starting place for more information. Then assessing with a TORCH passage or a cloze passage would give further data on

the kind of comprehension skills that could be developed in a support program.

Example 2: If a student is having difficulty reading the class material it will be necessary to take a Reading-With-Understanding Running Record to identify the cue-sources that are used and the cue-sources that are neglected. It will also become clear in the Running Record what reading strategies the student needs help to develop, and whether or not they are understanding what they are reading.

Reading-With-Understanding Running Record

Readers need to be able to understand written material when they read it silently. When a teacher begins to help students with their reading, the first task is to assess how well they get meaning from text they read silently. It is also important to identify if the material is too difficult. The Reading-With-Understanding Running Record has become a standard tool for getting this information.

The teacher presents the passage to the student saying, “This, passage is about (give a very brief statement in a sentence) ... I want you to read it to yourself, then tell me about it. “ After completing the silent reading, the student retells the passage to demonstrate his/her level of understanding. The teacher must recognise that at first some pupils may be unfamiliar with the task of retelling. This alerts the teacher to the need for some instruction in how to retell a passage.

Consideration should also be given as to how much can be taken in by the student in their first reading of a text. As an adult, retelling a newspaper editorial after a quick read will give you a feeling for what can reasonably be expected after one reading of a passage.

There are a variety of ways that students will retell text. One reader may give a global response: *It is about an expedition to the Chat.* Another may retell the passage in sequence; others may give main ideas; some may give unconnected items from the text.

The teacher’s role at this stage is as a receiver of information – the neutral observer. The teacher should not question or engage in dialogue about the passage but simply record what the student says. It is useful to allow students to refer to the passage if they choose to do so.

When the retelling is completed and the points are recorded the student is instructed to read the passage aloud. The teacher then takes a Running Record (refer to Clay, 1993, An Observation Survey for information on how to do this). After the oral reading the teacher may seek clarification of points from the retelling by saying, *Did you find out anymore as you read it aloud?* or *I was not sure what you meant when you said that. Can you help me?*

The information gained about the student’s reading and comprehension from a Reading-With-Understanding Running Record enables a teacher to find **Easy**, **Instructional** and **Hard** levels of text for each student.

97-100% Accuracy: Easy

92-96% Accuracy: Instructional

Below 91% Accuracy: Hard

Analysis of the Running Record at the Hard Level will show where the processes are breaking down and will give information on the use of the meaning, structure and visual cues.

A student may have read the text with 97-100% accuracy but have failed to demonstrate any real understanding of the text either in the retelling or in response to the probe questions. This information is crucial and indicates that the material is at the Hard Level, even if the Running Record taken of the student reading aloud indicates that the text is at Easy or Instructional level, since the student is not understanding what they are reading. The teacher will then plan for instruction accordingly.

Retelling is a useful indicator of understanding. Cambourne discusses it as a means of assessment in *The Whole Story* (1988: 173)

He points out that effective readers' retellings are:

- well organised, with evidence of selection and organisation of relevant detail
- typically contain the main points and/or essence of the original text
- are often characterized by paraphrases which capture the original meanings with different vocabulary

He further points out that less able readers' retellings

- are usually lists of unconnected items or events from the original text lack coherence and focus
- sound like an incomprehensible maze of disconnected discourse
- display little evidence of effective paraphrase
- show unsuccessful rote memorisation of the precise words and phrases used in the original text

Cambourne (1988) concludes by stating that good readers

- know that they should work actively and deliberately towards making sense of (comprehending) what it is they are reading
- are aware when comprehension is not occurring

Less-effective readers, as a group, do not have the same focus.

Reading-With-Understanding Running Record

Administration Procedure

1. Gather the texts (at the appropriate level) selected for Reading-With-Understanding Running Records.
2. Set the student at ease while filling in name, class, age, and date on the scoring sheet.
3. Introduce the passage by reading the title and saying:
"This passage is about ... and the people are ... I want you to read it to yourself, then tell me about it."
4. As the student retells the passage, record the points covered in UNDERSTANDING on summary sheet. Teachers will need to have read every selected passage and be aware of two or three main points in each before assessing the quality of the retelling. If a student

shows complete understanding, do not take a Running Record: offer another passage at the same level of a different type of writing.

5. After the retelling say:
“Now you can read the passage to me carefully.”
Record all reading behaviour on the score sheet.
6. After oral reading probe the student’s understanding of the text by asking for further comment on points made in the retelling, eg
“Tell me some more about ... Did you find out anything else?”
One or two probes are sufficient. Enter the information on the Summary Sheet.
7. Analyse the data using the Summary Sheet. Complete the form by setting teaching objectives.

Analysis: Refer frequently to these notes when learning how to analyse errors.

When analysing a student’s reading, teachers might ask themselves these questions:

Is the student trying to make sense of what is being read? (semantic cues ... meaning ... M) Does it make sense?

Is knowledge of language patterns being used? (syntactic cues ... structure ... S) Does that sound right?

Is knowledge of letters and their associated sounds being used? (graphophonic cues ... visual ... V) Does that look similar?

Are confirmation and self-correction strategies being used?

Download and copy the Reading With Understanding Running Record Summary Sheet from the myread.org website.

For further information and procedures see:

Clay, M. (3rd Edition 1987). *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties*, New Zealand: Heinemann.

Kemp, M. (1987). *Watching Children Read & Write*, Melbourne: Nelson Australia.

Rowe, G., Lamont, H., Daly, M., Edwards, D. & Mayor Cox, S. (2000). *Success with Reading & Writing: helping at-risk students 8-13 years*. Victoria: Eleanor Curtain Publishing.

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Stephen Mysliwy

THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION

While Inclusive Education seems to be the buzzword at the moment, it is not a new or separate issue. Growing our capacity to educate more children better is our core business.

Inclusive education is about more than the presence of students with disabilities in classrooms. Inclusion involves a philosophy of acceptance where all people within a school community, regardless of ability, disability, culture, religion or personal background, etc. are valued and treated with respect. It is a process of responding to the uniqueness of individuals, increasing

- presence
- access
- participation
- achievement

in a learning society.

An inclusive school culture creates a secure, collaborating, supportive community in which everyone feels worthwhile and is valued. Schools that continually analyse their practice in a cycle of plan, implement and review, have been referred to as ‘moving schools’. These schools are concerned with attending to the conditions for learning and teaching, realising that when we keep sight of the basics, learning will follow.

The *Index for Inclusion* is a resource which can help schools to reach out to all partners in the educative process. Developed in Britain at the Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education (CSIE) in collaboration with the University of Manchester and the University of Christ Church College, Canterbury, the *Index* is available locally from Education Queensland.

The *index* is a set of materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development. It is about building supportive communities and fostering high achievement for all staff and students. It is concerned with minimising all barriers to learning and participation, wherever they are located within the cultures, policies and practices of a school. With a full range of students in our schools and classrooms, a deeper understanding of school culture, policies and practices enables schools to develop ways of working which meet a range of student needs.

School, District and Network groups within Queensland are engaging in the *Index* process to

- adopt a self-review approach to analyse culture, policy and practice;
- identify barriers to learning and participation;
- build a community in which values, beliefs and expectations are shared;
- decide on priorities for change and inform school planning and review processes, including the Triennial School Review’
- strengthen school staff ability to address the needs of all students;
- use as an integral part of existing developmental policies, encouraging a wide and deep scrutiny of all school activities.

Robyn Robinson is available to work with schools wishing to use the *Index for Inclusion*.

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APPRAISEMENT AND THE RESEARCH-BASED PRINCIPLES

At the recent Statewide Conference of Support Teachers Learning Difficulties Appraisal, Suzanne Henden- Acting Manager Assessment and Reporting - walked us through *the research based principles of assessment for learning to guide classroom practice*.

It was good to see that the Appraisal tasks align well with the current Assessment & Reporting Reform Group's research based principles. However it was felt that appraisal information needs to ensure there is a balance of information that reflects not just the ST:LDs voice but also the teacher's and student's voices.

The research based principles have been featured in Education Views inserts "Growing an Assessment Culture" numbers 1 & 2 (in a fan graphic) and can be found at "<http://www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk>".

Look at the table below and consider how the Tasks stand up against these principles:

Research Based Principles: Assessment -	Appraisal Tasks
is part of effective planning	
focuses on how students learn	
is central to classroom practice	
is a key professional skill	
has an emotional impact	
affects learner motivation	
promotes commitment to learning goals and assessment criteria	
helps learners know how to improve	
encourages self-assessment	
recognizes all achievements	

You may wish to note areas where the Tasks are most successful and other areas where there is a need to improve them. These same principles apply to any assessment that we administer as part of our role in supporting students experiencing learning difficulties. How do our standardized tests align?

As active professionals we need to consider new research findings (and departmental initiatives) and use them to critique our professional practice.

Looking at the Appraisal Tasks, or any other assessment we use, through the eyes of these Assessment Principles may lead us to amend our assessment techniques, particularly in the areas of student self assessment and student voice. In this way we can encourage our students to take more responsibility for their own learning.

David Waterworth

APPRAISEMENT AND THE INDEX FOR INCLUSION	
APPRAISEMENT	INDEX FOR INCLUSION
Promotes understanding of the student	Asks to hear the student’s voice
Empowers parents	Parents involved in focus groups and surveys
Informs class teachers	Values all staff
Promotes effective planning	Teaching is planned with all students in mind
Seeks to address barriers to curriculum access	Encourages the participation of all students. Identifies barriers to learning
Identifies student strengths	Values diversity. Builds on school strengths
Seeks relevant assessment	Assessment contributes to the achievements of all students.
Promotes appropriate use of support services	Support services are distributed fairly
Support is given primarily by the class-room teacher	Support is a part of all teaching and all staff are involved in it.

Some days you must learn a great deal.
 But you should also have days when you allow
 what is already in you to swell up and touch everything.
 If you never let that happen, then you just accumulate
 facts,
 and they begin to rattle around inside of you.
E. L. Konigsburg
“The Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler,” 1967.

APPRAISEMENT AND INDEX FOR INCLUSION - ST:LD ACTIVITY

Appraisalment - Supportive Planning	Index for Inclusion - C1 indicators - Orchestrating Learning.
	Teaching is planned with the learning of all students in mind.
	Curriculum materials reflect the back-grounds, experiences and interests of all learners.
	Lessons extend the learning of all students.
	Teachers examine ways to reduce the need for the individual support of students.
	Class teachers take responsibility for the learning of all students in their classrooms.
	Lessons encourage the participation of all students.
	Students are actively involved in their own learning.
	Students learn collaboratively.
	Assessment contributes to the achievement of all students.
	Teachers plan, teach and review in partnership.

Index for Inclusion

Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow

REVISED
2002
EDITION

Developing learning and participation in schools

- The Index for Inclusion is a set of materials to guide schools through a process of inclusive school development. It is about building supportive communities which foster high achievement for all students. It encourages the widest scrutiny of everything that makes up the life of a school.
- The Index involves a self-review of school cultures, policies and practices, using a set of indicators, each associated with detailed questions. Through this exploration, barriers to learning and participation are identified, priorities for development are determined and plans are put into practice.

ORDER FORM

Available from: **Wide Bay Resource Centre**
C/ Maryborough Central State School
Kent Street
MARYBOROUGH Q 4650

EMAIL: **wbrc@marycentss.qld.edu.au**

Please send me copy/ies of Index for Inclusion @ \$44.00 (plus postage and handling).

COST
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4 Basic Principles of Effective Intervention

1. Begin instruction at the level the student needs it most. Treat the cause, not the symptom. This requires focused observations of students.
2. Assessments, not judgments.
3. Provide appropriate text for instructional and independent uses.
4. Maintain consistency in instruction. Focus attention on specific strategies.

Donna Gordan

PROFILE



ROBYNE SPRING

by Gerard Healy

Teaching Career

I started at Teachers' College at Kelvin Grove in the 60s but moved to Canberra where I completed a B. Ed (Early Childhood) at The University of Canberra and The Canberra School of Music, majoring in Education Studies and Music. My first posting was to a pre-school, but because I was able to teach classroom music I was transferred to the primary school, where I had a Year 1 class and taught music to the lower school students. I worked in an open-area teaching environment sharing with three other teachers. It was well set up and was an excellent teaching environment.

My husband Eddie transferred back to Brisbane and it was hard to find work here with the Queensland Education Department so I worked as a music teacher at various Catholic Primary Schools for two years. Eventually, once again because of my Music qualifications, I secured a position at Wondall Heights State School. The Support Teacher was Anne Turner and she was a tremendous help to me. Later at East Brisbane with an extremely demanding Year 6 class I met two more excellent Support Teachers, Judy Fraser and Jan Richardson. The example of these teachers doing such good work helped kindle my interest in Learning Support.

A move to a Year 3 class followed and it was partly because of my interest in finding out more about a girl with Down Syndrome in the class that I applied for the Graduate Diploma of Special Education course at Mt Gravatt C.A.E., as it then was. Pam Dodd interviewed me for a place in the course and although I did not come from the usual teaching background, I was accepted.

The six months back at college was full of long days under a 'regimented' structure that had a very practical foundation. We had to teach students in front of lecturers every week as well as one adult student in the evening. There were pracs with ST:LDs working in schools as well as access to Pam Dodd at any time. In those days there were full-time Senior ST:LDs, who could be called upon at any time to offer support and advice. The result was a good foundation for taking on the role, as Pam was such an inspiration to us all.

The usual arrangement was to return to your class/school for six months teaching and then return to college to complete the final six months (full time). However, due to commitments with my own children I did not return until five years later in 1990. By this time the scene had transformed, with the college now part of a University. The course was more 'intellectualised'; we were not required to attend every day but the same high standard was expected.

I then started as a ST:LD at Wellers Hill S.S., followed by Marshall Road, Belmont, Buranda, Ascot and then Kelvin Grove with a LD class. After I did the final six months, I was asked by Con

Pandelli to take a Special Class at The Gap S.S. for students in that cluster with low incidence impairments. Initially the students, from Years 1 to 7, were integrated in class, but I asked the Principal if I could form a class of 11 students, which I taught with only part-time teacher aide support. It was hard work but rewarding.

Then followed a transfer to Craigslea S.S. and Somerset Hills S.S. with time at Fortitude Valley S.S. as well. The Senior Support teachers were John McKenna and Steve Simmonds, who once again were a tremendous support. The region was divided into Stafford and Geebung districts and I was asked to be the Senior ST:LD for Stafford. I have been in that role for six years now and hope that I have been as supportive to the ST:LDs as previous ST:LDs have been to me.

Issues

What are your thoughts on Appraisalment?

It is very important to get information on students with learning difficulties and learning disabilities that is statewide and holds some sort of credence. I have been using a variety of methods to get information on students. I use standardised and diagnostic tests such as the Neale, BURT, South Australian Spelling, PM Benchmark, T.O.R.C.H., Probe and D.M.T. as well as the set tasks.

What about Moderation?

I find this process really useful. It gives a good view of what other people are doing and helps me to compare what my results are with others.

What training do you think is required for the role of ST:LD?

It is important for Universities to be careful in training people. They need not just the theory but also the practical aspects, with work experience and/or work shadowing with good support teachers in schools. We have a high percentage of qualified people in Stafford district but it is not the case everywhere.

What about the ST:LD Network?

There are issues of isolation working as a ST:LD in schools and the network helps to overcome some of these. We have, I believe, a strong network in the Stafford district, which meets regularly. The major focus is on Professional Development. We have been fortunate to have presenters such as David Waterworth (Support Teacher Appraisalment) come to the meetings and ensure that we are well informed.

Finally, Robyne what is your aim in the job?

To help children realise how clever they are.



WORTH A LOOK

LANC (Literacy and Numeracy Topical Conversations)

<http://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/learning/literate-futures/lanc.html>

Much information relating to assessment practices is available through LANC. Search the archives for specific information. For example, in 2002 there were in-depth discussions about the teaching of spelling. Another highly topical issue is 'demand writing', that is coaching students to meet the requirements of systemic tests. One contributor commented:

"We have used the rubric devised by QSA as the basis for assessing student writing. The 100 point making scale is a Pat Donnelly original. We're using the rubric to moderate student writing samples across about 20 schools on the PFD in term 3." Cheers, Pat

Search the archives using the term 'Demand writing'. The rubric referred to is available. Scroll down to the date, 29/05/03 where the contributor provides, by way of an attachment a very useful rubric.

ENC: Standardized Assessment

<http://www.enc.org/topics/assessment/testing/>

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse, at the University of Ohio provides a wealth of information and teaching resources in the curriculum areas of Maths and Science. One section focuses on assessment and provides important information about issues that currently impact on our practice. 'High stakes assessment' is one that comes to mind.

Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators

<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/assess.html>

For those who are wishing to incorporate rubrics more extensively into their practice this is a great source for this type of assessment. For those who may wish to find out a little more about 'digital portfolios', look under 'Portfolios' for an article by David Niquidula who is one of the proponents of this type of assessment.

Reading Rockets

<http://readingrockets.org/>

'Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that looks at how young kids learn to read, why so many struggle, and how caring adults can help them.' You may be interested in the following assessment tool. As well, it is worthwhile searching the site using 'assessment' for significant articles relevant to the topic.

Get ready to read

<http://www.readingrockets.org/getready/>

As Lee Willett says, 'Here's an early reading assessment tool which you might like to look at. It's covering the same territory as the concepts of print. Looks a bit like the old 'Gates MacGinitie' online. I think it could be useful for early childhood teachers who want to do a little exploration in a way that may be a bit more appealing to kids. It 's one that parents may also like to look at.'

Tasmanian Department of Education: Assessment

<http://www.education.tas.gov.au/ltag/assessment/terms/terms.htm>

If you're looking for assistance with assessment terms, this site could prove very useful. These are available as a Word document or in pdf format for ease of copying.



letter "c" and have them write it ...'c'. If you add a line to 'c' you will create **d** and **d** comes after c. I hope this helps.

Sarah Cronk

I have used a technique from a professor with a slight adaptation.

Place your fingers in front of you with both thumbs upward. The left is your /b/ the right is your /d/.

Now turn the hands upside down. Reference the child to see that the left is the /p/ and the right is the /g/.

I hope this helps!

Sheila Hommema

RTEACHER archives at: <http://www.reading.org/archives/rteacher.html>

Letter confusions

Just a quick strategy that I have used, which you may find helpful:

If you have the children make fists with thumbs up ... putting 2 hands together to make a "bed" ... remind them to think of the word **bed**. It starts with **b** and ends with **d**. If they look at their hands/fists ... they will see which direction the letters should go in.

Erika Furr

I have also worked with students that confuse **b** and **d**.

A helpful hint I use with my students is to stop and think about which letter comes before the

RESEARCH SKILLS CHECKLIST

Name of Student: _____

Year in school: _____ Today's date: _____

Directions to student:

Read each statement. Tick (✓) those that you do all the time.

Place a (●) beside those that you do sometimes.

Place a (-) beside those that you do occasionally.

When you read texts for information, what do you do?

In what order do you use them?

- Quickly scan the passage to get the general idea first?
- Think about the way the passage is organised?
- Underline or highlight important information?
- Try to recall the main ideas after you have finished reading?
- Try to memorise important information?
- Try to link new ideas to what you already know?
- Reread parts when they are not clear?
- Copy important information?
- Write important information in your own words?
- Make an outline of the important information?
- Draw a diagram to link important information?
- Use other strategies?
Which ones?

TEACHER/STUDENT DISCUSSION

What should I do before reading?	Notes
<p><i>Scan the passage quickly to get an idea what it is about and what sort (genre) of writing it is.</i></p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What do you think this passage is going to be about?</i>• <i>What do you expect to find out?</i>• <i>Do you know a lot about the topic?</i>• <i>If you know a lot, what do you think you should do first?</i> <p>Discuss one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• making use of pictures and diagrams• brainstorming• organising information on a graphic organiser• rehearsing• visualising in your mind what is already known, etc. <p>Then discuss how the student plans for reading. You could, for example, discuss the following.</p> <p><i>What sort of text is it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How would you break up this text for reading? Why?</i>• <i>Would it be a good idea to read the text quickly first? Why? or Why not?</i> <p>If there are illustrations, discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will these help your reading?	

TEACHER / STUDENT DISCUSSION

What should I do during reading?

Notes

How will you go about getting the meaning of what the author is talking about?

Discuss:

- *Will you read aloud and try to listen for important points?*
(Does that work for you?)
- *After you've read a section will you say in your own words out loud what you have learned?*
(Does that work for you?)
- *Will you record the important points in some way? How? What will you write?*
(Does that work for you?)
- *Will you try to take a 'snapshot' of what is happening in each section?*
(Does that work for you?)

TEACHER / STUDENT DISCUSSION

What should I do after reading?

Notes

What is the author of this passage saying?

or

Give me the gist of what the author is saying in your own words.

Underline any sentences, phrases and vocabulary that tell you this.

Discuss:

What is it important for you to remember in this passage, (article, text)? Why?

How can you go about remembering or recording what you have read? (What works for you?)

- recall points in your mind.
- use a prompt card to help you remember and find the important information.
- write points in your own words.
- represent points on an organiser.
- reread to check you have not left out any important points.
- tell someone what you have learned.
- discuss it with friends who have already read the article.
- form some unanswered questions that are touched on in the passage.
- compare what is written with some other text you have already read about the topic.
- visualising the main points in the passage.

Discuss:

*What interested you in the article you read?
In what way?*

Name of Student:	Year in School:	Date:
<p>A. Which strategies can the student use independently?</p> <p>Does he or she like to use them?</p>	NOTES	
<p>B. Which strategies is the student in the process of learning?</p> <p>Does he or she want to master these strategies?</p>		
<p>C. How independent is the student in successfully summarising the main ideas in texts?</p>	<p><i>Not at all:</i> <i>Comment:</i></p> <p><i>To a small degree:</i> <i>Comment:</i></p> <p><i>To a large degree:</i> <i>Comment:</i></p>	
<p>D. How do you and the student think he or she learns best (e.g., imaging, working with peers, writing key words during working)?</p>	<p><i>List:</i></p>	
<p>E. What can the student do now that he or she could not do at the start of this Interactive Assessment? (Teacher's observation)</p> <p>What does the student believe he or she can now do that was not possible before this interactive process?</p>		

FOLLOW-UP TEACHING

List clear goals:

How can this teaching be supported in the classroom?

REMEDIAL AND SUPPORT TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND
PO Box 62, Grange 4051

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please indicate work sector:

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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Position / role:			
Telephone:	[]	Fax:	[]
Email:			

QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Institution	Date completed

TEACHING EXPERIENCE: Up to 5 years 5-10 years 10 years or more
(Briefly state when and in which area of Education)

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Signature of applicant:	Date: / /
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NB PLEASE ATTACH

1. Payment of \$62.00 (\$50.00 annual subscription plus \$12.00 for processing of application).
2. Photocopy of Board of Teacher Registration receipt (to confirm status and qualifications), or photocopies as evidence of qualification, and contact details for 2 referees, e.g., current members of this Association, contact at the tertiary institution where qualifications were obtained, or a current Education Qld employee.

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