

ADMINISTRACIÓN Y DESARROLLO DEL INSTRUMENTO DE OBSERVACIÓN

DE LOS LOGROS DE LA LECTO-ESCRITURA INICIAL
EN DESCUBRIENDO LA LECTURA

SPANISH RECONSTRUCTION OF AN OBSERVATION SURVEY
OF EARLY LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

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Literacy Trust

Administración y desarrollo del Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial en Descubriendo la Lectura: Spanish Reconstruction of An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement

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The pronouns 'she' and 'he' have often been used in this text to refer to the teacher and child respectively. Despite a possible charge of sexist bias it makes for clearer, easier reading if such references are consistent.

Table of Contents

Preface & Acknowledgements	4
Chapter 1: Observing change in early literacy behaviors.....	5
Chapter 2: Reading and writing: Processing the information in print	16
Chapter 3: Assisting young children making slow progress	25
Chapter 4: Bilingual education and early intervention in the United States	38
Chapter 5: The refinement and updating of the <i>Instrumento de observación</i>	51
Chapter 6: Observation task for <i>Conceptos del texto impreso</i>	55
Chapter 7: Taking records of reading continuous texts	68
Chapter 8: Observation task for <i>Identificación de letras</i>	106
Chapter 9: Observation task for <i>Lectura de palabras</i>	114
Chapter 10: Observation task for <i>Escritura de vocabulario</i>	119
Chapter 11: Observation task for <i>Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras</i>	136
Chapter 12: Summarizing the <i>Instrumento de observación</i> results	144
Chapter 13: The teacher and the observations	158
Appendices	167
Achievement stanines	168
Chapter 5 (original): The reconstruction of the English Observation Survey into Spanish: An overview and discussion of issues	173
References	186
Authors.....	193



Preface

This book guides the administration of the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* within the context of Descubriendo la Lectura implementation. It includes detailed administration protocols and provides a summary of current research, developments, and practices in bilingual education as they relate to Descubriendo la Lectura.

The content is adapted and reconstructed from Marie Clay's *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement*, with permission from the Marie Clay Literacy Trust. This edition also incorporates elements of the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial*, with permission granted by the original authors. We extend our deepest gratitude for the pioneering work of Kathy Escamilla, Ana María Andrade, Amelia G. M. Basurto, Olivia A. Ruiz and, of course, Marie M. Clay. We are also profoundly grateful for the ongoing support and contributions of the Marie Clay Literacy Trust.

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Chapter I

Observing change in early literacy behaviors

AN INTRODUCTION TO SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

Observation of what goes on in classrooms has uncovered differences in the time allocated to children and activities. This shows clearly that high progress children get a greater number of opportunities to learn than low progress children. Studies of how successful children learn show them getting better and better at literacy tasks as they draw away from other children whose progress occurs at an apparently slower rate. One reason for this slow rate of learning could be that children are not getting the kinds of help they need to learn at a faster pace.

Observing individual progress

If we attend to individual children as they work, and if we focus on the progressions in learning that occur over time, our detailed observations can provide feedback for our teaching. Carefully recorded observations can lead us to modify our instruction to meet the learning needs of particular children in the formative stages of new learning, like beginning reading, beginning writing and beginning mathematics.

Planned observations can capture evidence of early progress. All science is based on systematic observation of phenomena under known conditions. Physicists or chemists in laboratories, botanists and zoologists in the field, and behavioral scientists in psychology, sociology, linguistics and cultural anthropology all use observation to gather research data, but in each of those subjects the observation takes place under strictly controlled conditions. In the past it was not easy to convince teachers that observing individual children at work was a legitimate part of literacy teaching and assessment. Despite some lingering mistrust, direct observation in research about young learners is not only acceptable but has a complementary role to play alongside other research and assessment approaches. It is particularly useful for children up to eight or nine years of age (Genishi, 1982; Siegler, 2006).

Assessment

Measuring outcomes

Historically, most educational assessment has been directed to the outcomes of instruction. We wait until the end of the instruction sequence before we assess. Then we monitor national effectiveness and assess

- school effectiveness
- teacher effectiveness
- primary (elementary) school outcomes, and
- high school outcomes.

When we use tests to measure the outcomes of teaching, the instruction of the learners is already over. In legal terms, we would say that the test score comes after the fact. Based on what these scores reveal it is almost too late to change the fate of the students. We no longer have the chance to do that; the opportunity has gone.

Educators have come to rely mainly on systematic testing of outcomes rather than systematic observation of learning. The measurement strategies used to develop tests and to guide research analyses lead us towards sound interpretations of tests, but as we improved our standardized tests we also deprived teachers and administrators of valuable information about how learners were learning. There is something seductive in the efficiency of final assessment scores. Yet in the periods leading up to these final assessments, children learn things every day. In education, we also need to evaluate the progress of learners as they make their way towards those final assessments. A class teacher needs to be aware of the individual progress of each young learner over time.

Of course we need research which looks for explanations of what causes what, or what conditions bring about differences. The answers to such questions call for the use of a variety of research paradigms for testing and analyzing data, but for effective instruction we also need answers to two basic questions.

- What typically occurs for the children we teach while learning is taking place during the time between assessments?
- How is this individual child changing over time in relation to what typically occurs?

Teachers who have answers to these questions will be better able to adapt the daily instruction of their pupils. Observations of a standard kind provide the teacher with appropriate feedback (see Systematic observation of learners section).

Measures of outcomes tell us about the achievement levels of the education system. Such assessments do not tell us what led to those achievement levels. We do not know from the assessments how the high achievement levels were obtained, or why there are low achievement levels. If we try to use those results to improve instruction we can only guess how to change our teaching and how to change our policies.

We do not have to test all children to assess educational standards at the national, state, or district level; we can use sampling methods to get information on standards in the same way that we conduct public opinion polls. We do not need to assess every child to know whether the school system is producing satisfactory outcomes. In many countries there is some agreement that this assessment of the education system can be done best by assessing students from the age of nine years and upwards.

Measuring abilities

Measurement theory has allowed us to measure the abilities of individual learners (their intelligence, language skills, auditory and visual perception, and so on). When we measure these things we predict how well a particular student might learn in our programs. This type of testing is usually administered prior to instruction and it has resulted in children being grouped according to estimated abilities.

Even when we give these tests to individuals we score them according to what we know happens to groups of children. We predict for individuals from group data, not from individual data. We use norms, or average scores for children of the same age. Such predictions often prove to be wrong for individual children.

If teachers do use outcome tests and ability scores, and many will be required to do so, they should be aware that every expectation they hold of what a child can and cannot learn should be mistrusted. This means that they should make a hypothesis that they are willing to revise. If we give the learner particular opportunities and different learning conditions, he might prove the test's predictions to be wrong. Teachers should always be ready to be surprised by any child.

Every test score has some error of measurement attached to it; there is error in group scores, and error in individual scores. We should keep an open mind about what is possible for the individual child to achieve. We have in the past made assumptions about children that have closed the door on further opportunities to learn.

Whenever our predictions for particular children are wrong, teaching practices tend

to deprive those children of learning opportunities. We exclude them from certain opportunities or challenges. We

- keep them out of school, or
- hold them back to repeat the same class with the same curriculum
- give them less to learn
- provide radically simplified tasks.

Very young children have usually been studied using direct observation (in developmental psychology). Early childhood educators had to use observations of what children can do because little children often cannot put into words what they are doing or thinking, and they cannot complete paper and pencil questionnaires. Studies of how children learn to speak have been exciting, and so have some of the studies of what children are learning as they learn to read and write. However teachers must go beyond reactions like ‘*¡Ah!*’ or ‘*¡Estoy sorprendido/a!*’ and ‘*¡Qué lindo!*’ and try to understand what is happening as individual children learn.

Assessments that guide our teaching

Effective teaching calls for a third kind of assessment, that is assessment designed to record how the child works on tasks. With this kind of information, teachers can modify their teaching accordingly. Compare this to a football game. The quality of the team play is not improved by looking at the final score. The coach must look closely at how the team is playing the game and help the players to use strategic moves that produce a better final score.

When the class teacher observes how individual children are problem-solving, it makes a difference to what happens in classrooms. Such observations are particularly useful in three kinds of situations

- for young children up to eight years of age
- at the introduction of new kinds of learning
- when the activity being learned is complex.

Classroom teachers can observe students as they construct responses by moving among them as they work. They can observe how individuals change over time by keeping good records, and they can allow children to take different learning paths to the same outcomes because they are clearly aware of the learning that is occurring.

Such teachers are like craftspeople monitoring how their products take shape. Think of the painter or potter adjusting the light, shade, color, shape or texture of a product in formation. Or we could think of the violinist in the orchestra who knows that one of his strings is slipping off pitch. He takes an opportunity during a pause in the performance

to avert disaster by tightening the string. He would not wait for the critic's review of the performance in the morning paper to say one violin was out of tune! Skilled craftspeople fine-tune the ongoing construction or performance. Teaching involves making on-the-run adjustments of this kind.

To improve teaching, teachers need to observe children's responses as they learn to read and write and look out for

- competencies and confusions
- strengths and weaknesses
- evidence of processing and strategic activities
- evidence of what the child can already control.

Observation

Observing oral language

Studies of how children learn to speak have produced exciting results. In the 1960s researchers went into homes to observe children learning language and record its use as it occurred in natural settings. They followed the progress of individual children as they developed and as their language changed. They studied what actually occurred, making precise records, and they did not depend on tests or on recollections of what occurred (Brown, 1973; Hart & Risley, 1999; Paley, 1981; Wells, 1986).

Researchers' interest shifted from an early focus on the structures of language to the meanings of language. In the 1970s this evolution led us to study the effects of the contexts in which language occurs. The young child's language is so related to the things he is talking about that you can have trouble understanding him unless you also know what he is referring to. We became more sensitive to the ways we change our language according to the place we are in, and who we are talking to. We have learned more about the ways that the languages of the homes differ, more about dialects, and more about the complexities of bilingual learning (Heath, 1983).

Attention moved to the detailed study of interactions between mothers and children, teachers and children, and children with one another. As a result of all this recording of naturally occurring behavior we now know a great deal more about the ways in which the contexts of language interactions facilitate or constrain children's language development. We know that entry into formal education settings – schools and preschools – reduces children's opportunities for talking. And we know how schooling can prevent children from using the language which they used so effectively before they came to school (Cazden, 2001).¹

¹ Using the *Record of Oral Language* (Clay et al., 2007), *Classroom Discourse* (Cazden, 2001) or a standard story-retelling task (McKenzie, 1986; Morrow, 1989), would sensitize teachers to individual differences in children's growing control over constructing oral language.

Observing emerging literacy

Since the mid-1970s there have been some interesting observational studies of children's writing. The young child has emerged as an active participant in the process of becoming a writer. Studies of Mexican and Argentinian children (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Vernon & Ferreiro, 1999) describe the fascinating shifts that occur well before children begin to use the alphabetical principle of letter-sound relationships, which we commonly think of as the beginning of writing. The preschool children in these studies were making discoveries about writing, and were trying to construct writing systems. This observation of early writing behaviors has taken us forward in great leaps. We now know much more about the years of development and learning that occur *before* children might be in a position to take a spelling test and get a few items correct.

Preschool children explore the detail of print in their environment, on signs, cereal boxes and television advertisements. They develop concepts about books, newspapers and messages, and learn a little about what it is to read these. Case studies over long periods of time show how more advanced concepts emerge out of earlier understandings. From what they have learned about the print in their environment, children form primitive hypotheses about letters, words or messages both printed and handwritten. It is a widely held view that learning to read and write in school will be easier for the child with rich preschool literacy experiences than it is for the child who has had few opportunities for such learning.

We have learned of these things mainly through research which has used observation rather than experimentation as its method of inquiry. When we become neutral observers and watch children at work in systematic and repeatable ways we begin to uncover some of our own assumptions and notice how wrong these can sometimes be.

Observing school entrants

Sensitive observation of school entrants has distinct advantages over readiness tests. By the time children enter school they have been learning for five to six years and every child is ready to learn more than he or she already knows. Teachers must take them from where they are to somewhere else.

When we give a readiness test to a new school entrant we are trying to predict school progress from what a child already knows (see Measuring abilities section). We are merely asking '¿Estás listo/a para mi programa?' Readiness tests divide children into two groups: a competent group ready to learn on a particular program and a problem group supposedly not ready for this type of learning. On the other hand, observations which record what any learner already knows about emerging literacy eliminate the problem group. All children are ready to learn something, but each child starts his or her learning from a different place.

Suppose we observe the literacy behaviors of a group of new school entrants. Some know a few things about reading and writing and others know very little. Those who know very little may have paid almost no attention to print in their preschool years because they had little opportunity or encouragement to do so, or because they had no incentive or interest. Perhaps some adults around them tried to teach them to read and write and the children found the tasks very confusing and so gave up on trying to learn.

What the young child knows about literacy when he or she enters school is not a matter of competency unfolding from within, since in an oral culture where literacy does not exist, no such behavior unfolds. It is a matter of having the opportunity to learn how to use a very arbitrary symbol system, and the new entrant teacher may not know about the opportunity a particular child has had.

There will be individual differences for many reasons but there is one aspect of development that we can influence and foster – we *can* provide appropriate opportunities for the child to learn. That usually means providing a responsive environment within which the child can explore and negotiate meanings.

When children enter school we need to observe what they know and can do, and build on that foundation whether it is rich or meager.

The New Zealand teachers with whom Marie Clay worked in various research projects did observe children when they entered school and set out to expand outwards from the various competencies that children already had. The teachers taught in ways that introduced children to print in reading and writing activities so that they could learn more than they already knew. They gave more help and more attention to the children who knew the least. The teachers did not set them aside to ‘ripen’ on their own. They considered their job was to make up for missed opportunities in learning.

Stallman and Pearson (1990) reported that in the United States, the Concepts About Print tasks have tended to be used in kindergarten in much the same way that readiness tests are often used. But the *Conceptos del texto impreso* task is not a readiness test because it samples only one dimension of a child’s preparation for formal instruction.

Marie Clay thinks we should abandon the readiness concept. All children are ready to learn more than they already know. It is the teachers who need to know how to create appropriate instruction for each child, whatever his or her starting point. To do this effectively they need to observe how literacy behaviors change throughout the first years of school (See also Clay, 2015a.)

Clay’s analyses of beginning reading and writing tell her that children have to extend their knowledge along each of several different dimensions of learning as they approach

formal literacy instruction. At the same time they have to learn how to relate learning in any one of these areas (say letter learning) to learning in any other (say messages and meanings). Along each of these dimensions more learning has to occur. It does not happen in an orderly way. It is not the same for all children. Each learner starts with what he or she already knows and uses that to support what has to be learned next.

To become observers of the early stages of literacy learning teachers will have to give up looking for a single, short assessment test for the acquisition stages of reading and writing. Children move into reading by different tracks and early assessments must be wide-ranging. If there is a single task that stands up better than any other it is the Running Record (*Registro progresivo*) of text reading. This is a neutral observation task, able to be used in any system of reading instruction, and to record progress on whatever gradient of text difficulty has been adopted by the education system (See Chapter 7: Taking records of reading continuous texts; also Johnston, 1996, 2000.)

Standardized tests are poor measures of slow progress

It is difficult and perhaps impossible to design good measurement tools for use close to the onset of instruction. Standardized tests only sample from a wide range of behaviors and they do not discriminate well until the majority of children have made considerable progress (Clay, 2015a). Yet if you ask teachers to identify young children making slow progress they can do this with considerable accuracy earlier than standardized tests can do. In Clay's research 20 to 25 percent of beginning readers were showing some confusions and difficulties 12 to 18 months before good assessments could be obtained from standardized tests. The children were at the tail end of the distribution of test scores, moving very slowly up from zero scores. Systematic observation by teachers is an alternative way to achieve early identification of children who need supplementary help.

For similar reasons age or grade level scores are not very satisfactory indicators of progress in the first years of school. Because children enter school with very different knowledge about reading and writing, assessments on standard measures of performance are not very informative. Most low achieving children would have zero to low scores for long periods. I would want to have, in addition, records of the small amounts of progress made by individual children - where they were at various points during the year, how they work on the problems they find in texts and what kind of processing they used with what texts.

Observational data must be as reliable as test data to be acceptable as evidence. Running Records have been shown to be a highly reliable way of measuring accuracy and error (reliability $r = 0.98$). Observers find it more difficult to agree on self-correction behaviors ($r = 0.68$).

The data from *Registros progresivos* of text reading have both face and content validity. If you can say a child can read a particular book at a given level of competency, little or nothing is being inferred.

You can count the number of correct words to get an accuracy score. While the record does not give a measure of something labeled comprehension you can assess this subjectively by recording the child's responses when you ask him about the story, and you can analyze *errores* and *autocorrecciones* to find out how well the child works for meaning. You will not get a score for how many letters the child knows, but you can see whether the child uses his letter knowledge on the run in his reading.

In summary, standardized tests are indirect ways of observing children's progress. They are suitable for analyzing the behaviors of groups of children but cannot compare with the observation of learners at work in terms of providing the information needed to design sound instruction. On the other hand, the units of measurement in the observation tasks are immediately transferable to teaching interventions because they direct a teacher's attention to precisely what it is that she needs to teach.

SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION OF LEARNERS

Educators have done a great deal of systematic testing and relatively little systematic observation of learning. One could argue that educators need to give most of their attention to the systematic observation of learners who are on the way to those final scores on tests. Systematic observations have four characteristics in common with good measurement instruments. They provide

- a standard task
- a standard way of administering the task
- ways of knowing when we can rely on our observations and make valid comparisons
- a task that is like a real world task as a guarantee that the observations will relate to what the child is likely to do in the real world (for this establishes the validity of the observation).

Taken together, a standard task with standard administration and with standard scoring procedures provide sound measurement conditions. We would otherwise be measuring with a piece of stretchy tape instead of using an instrument that behaves in the same way on every occasion. Two measurements with a stretchy tape cannot be compared; and comparability is often more important not only at the national, state and district level but at the individual level. Monitoring the progress of children we often want reliable ways to compare a student on two of his own performances. A standard task, which is administered and scored in a standard way, gives one kind of guarantee of reliability when we make such comparisons.

Not all of our observations have to be on standard tasks but when we want to capture change over time, standard tasks are more reliable. Observations have some sources of error not found in standardized tests. One source of error is that what the observer knows about reading and writing will determine what he or she is likely to take note of in children's literacy development. You bring to the observation what you already believe. Observers must be aware of this and try to correct for it. All teachers using the tasks in the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* should receive training on how to administer, score, and interpret their results in reliable ways.

When important decisions are to be made we should increase the range of observations we make in order to decrease the risk of making errors in our interpretations. We need to design procedures that limit the possibilities of being in error or being misled by what we observe. That is why, in this book, space is given to the precautions that observers must take if they wish to gather valid records. It is also why a wide range of measures for observations should be made. No one technique is sufficiently reliable on its own.

To say a test score is unreliable means that if you used that measure again, at around the same time, you might get very different results. We have to be concerned about whether our assessments are reliable because we do not want to alter our teaching, or decide on a child's placement, on the basis of a flawed judgment. We need to be able to rely on the data from which we make our judgments.

For example, a word test should never be used in isolation because it assesses only one aspect of early reading behaviors. The child is learning more about letters, how print is written down, how to form letters and write words, and something about letter sound relationships. Teachers need to know how learning is proceeding in each of these areas. That is why the observation tasks described in this survey range across each of these areas of knowledge.

It is important that we use tasks that are authentic. The word authentic has arisen among educators because many tests of reading and writing and spelling are being challenged as non-valid measures of real world literacy activities. One of the criticisms of the multiple choice type of test items is that they are a special type of task not found in real life. They are a test device with no real world reference. It would be better to find sound assessment procedures which reflect what the learner is mastering or struggling to master. (*Conceptos del texto impreso* was designed to have such authenticity 20 years before that word appeared in the assessment field.)

Characteristics of observation tasks

All of the observation tasks in the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* were developed in research studies. The tasks have the qualities of sound assessment instruments with reliability and validity discrimination indices established in research. Theories of measurement and other theories were taken into account in the design of these observation tasks. Marie Clay drew on evidence from the psychology of learning, from developmental psychology, from studies of individual differences, and from theories about social factors and the influence of contexts on learning.

The observation tasks were not designed to produce samples of work which go into portfolios; they were designed to make a teacher attend to how children work at learning in the classroom. It is useful to supplement our observations of children's products in a portfolio with systematic observation tasks because portfolio products are often channeled by the teacher's ways of teaching or their expectations. Sometimes a different kind of observation task will confront the teacher with a new kind of evidence of a child's strengths or problems.

The observation tasks in this survey do not simplify the learning challenge. They are designed to allow children to work with the complexities of written language. They do not measure children's general abilities, and they do not look for the outcomes of a particular program. They tell teachers something about how the learner searches for information in printed texts and how he works with that information.

Chapter 2

Reading and writing: Processing the information in print

READING CONTINUOUS TEXT

Reading, like thinking, involves complex processing. The reader has to produce responses to the words the author wrote. In some way the reader has to match his or her thinking to that of the author. Good readers reduce their uncertainty about what they are reading by asking themselves very effective questions as they read; they know when they are more or less on-track. On the other hand, poor readers ask themselves rather trivial questions and waste their opportunities to reduce their uncertainty. They do not put the information-seeking processes into effective sequences.

Many instructional programs direct students to the trivial questions. They do not mean to confuse children but they do, by oversimplifying and stressing particular aspects of the processing involved. All readers, be they five-year-old beginners working on their first books or effective adult readers, need to find and use different kinds of information in print and combine the information they find with what they carry in their heads from their past experiences with language. What kinds of information must be used? They include

- knowledge of how the world works
- the possible meanings of the text
- the sentence structures of the language
- rules about the order of ideas, or words, or letters
- the words used often in the language
- the alphabet
- special features of sound, shape and layout
- special knowledge about books and literary experiences.

Readers work on several of these features and accurate reading is a perfect match with the author's text on all the features. The terms “look and say” or “sight words” or “phonics” are used to describe some recommended methods of instruction which are oversimplified accounts of what we actually need to learn to do in order to be able to read.

When the reader reads for meaning, he is finding and using information from many sources. After only one year of instruction the high progress reader can pull many different kinds of information together to read accurately. When he reads, he appears to focus on the meaning of the text. If he anticipates something about structure (for example as he turns the page), this can be checked by a rapid search with his eyes that

picks up visual information, triggers sound-to-letter or letter-to-sound associations, or clusters of letters and words already known. The high progress 6-year-old has several ways of functioning according to the type of reading material or the difficulty level of the material. If he cannot get the meaning with fast recall of known words he shifts to using slower analysis of words, letter clusters and letters. If the first things he notices are some letters, he makes some letter-to-sound links to solve the words which become chunked in phrases to get to messages. He will use the words he knows to get to new words and he will also use his knowledge of letter clusters or letter sound associations to unpick new words. This does not work too well unless the word is already known in the sense of being a part of his speaking vocabulary. Throughout this entire flexible process, the competent reader manages to stay focused on the messages conveyed by the text while unpicking the detailed information stored in the print on the page.

On the other hand, a low progress reader, or a reader at risk of having difficulty learning to read, tends to operate slowly on a narrow range of weak processes. He may rely on making up the story from some memory of the book and pay only slight attention to visual details. He may disregard obvious discrepancies between his response and the words on the page. He may be looking so hard for words he knows, and guessing words from first letters, that he forgets what the message is about. Such primitive ways of operating on print can easily become established habits if they are practiced day after day, and the habits become very resistant to change. For some children this is what happens in the first year of formal instruction.

That is why systematic observation of what the child can do, and where his new learning is taking him, is so important in the first year of school. Close and individual attention from a teacher at this stage can help children to operate on print in more efficient ways, so that potential low progress readers come to function like the high progress readers. If that does not happen they do not learn to work effectively under normal classroom conditions and they may never make progress at average rates.

In recent years there have been shifts in our understanding of some psychological processes and yet old theories remain encapsulated in our teaching methods and assumptions. Some of these shifts need to be reviewed here. The most important challenge for the teacher of reading is to change the ways in which the child operates on print to get to the messages.

We must look briefly at a view of early literacy responses which change over time to become complex, fast and interactive. (For a more extended account of change in early literacy learning see Clay, 2014, 2015a, 2015b).

This list introduces four different areas of learning which facilitate progress in reading.

1. *Reading involves messages expressed in language.* Usually that language is a special kind of language found in books. Children may not use the same oral language dialect as that used by the teacher or the reading books, but most children will have a well-developed language system and will communicate well in their homes and communities. They will control most of the sounds of the language and a large vocabulary of words, which are labels for quite complex sets of meanings, and they will have flexible ways of constructing sentences. However, the spoken language dialect differs in important ways from the written language dialect they will find in their reading books.
2. *Reading also involves knowing about the conventions used to print language* – directional rules, space formats, and punctuation signals for new sentences, new speakers, surprise, emphasis, and questions. These are things which the skilled reader does not think about. He responds giving only minimal attention to such conventions of print. But beginning readers have to learn the directional “road rules” for written language, for these rules determine the order of what you must attend to in print. Ignoring the signals of layout and punctuation will lead to some fundamental confusions. (See Clay, 2010b.)
3. *Reading involves visual patterns – groups of words, word parts, clusters of letters and single letters,* depending on how you want to break up the visual patterns. Processing information from the printed page is very fast in skilled readers. In experiments we can show how adults scan text to pick up patterns or clusters of letters but only when we drastically alter the reading situation. Luckily young children operate on visual patterns slowly enough for us to observe some of what they do.
4. *Reading involves listening to language and hearing clear breaks between words.* Young children have some difficulty breaking messages up into words. They have greater difficulty breaking up a word into its sequence of sounds and hearing the sounds in sequence. This is not strange. Some of us have the same problem with the note sequences in a complicated melody.

Language was discussed first because the meanings embodied in print are of high utility. It is easier to read a text when one already knows something about the topic. Language provides powerful sources of information for literacy activities. One important source is the meanings of words, phrases, sentences and texts, and another lies in the structures of the sentences. A less reliable and sometimes confusing and distorting source of information for the young reader lies in the letter-sound relationships. However, theoretical analyses tell us that there are consistencies in letter-to-sound relationships and regularities in spelling patterns (clusters of letters), both of which assist the mature reader’s reading. The human brain is well-designed to search for and find such regularities, and make use of them. Debate still surrounds letter-to-sound and sound-to-letter relationships, and in particular how they should be taught to beginning readers.

The conventions used to print language need to be learned because we need to attend to the visual information in the order laid out in the printer's code, more or less. You can scan a picture in any direction you like but print is laid out in an order which must be followed by the reader.

Visual information is essential for fluent correct responding and skilled readers tend to use visual knowledge in a highly efficient way, scanning at several levels in order to check on the messages of the text. The beginning reader must discover for himself how to do this scanning and how to visually analyze print to locate features that distinguish between letters and words.

The sound sequences in words (which linguists call the sequences of phonemes) are also used in rapid reading, perhaps to anticipate a word in peripheral vision (out to the right in written Spanish) and to check any word the reader is uncertain about. This requires the reader to use two kinds of detailed and carefully synchronized analysis – an analysis of sounds in sequence, and a left-to-right visual analysis with appropriate return sweeps at the end of lines.

Most children can become literate if the conditions for learning are right for them. Three shifts in knowledge about learning have raised our expectations for greater success for more children in literacy learning today.

- First, it is accepted now that experience counts in cognitive functioning, and some of what we thought of as given in intelligence is learned during the process of cognitive development.
- Second, there has been a shift away from the belief that in some rough-and-ready way achievement matches to general measured intelligence. We have known for decades that when you look at the children who are over-achieving, for example when a child is reading well and several years above his mental age level, then the supposed match between achievement and intelligence must be questioned.

If we put those two concepts together – that some part of the cognitive process is learned or realized through experience and that achievement ages do not necessarily match mental ages – there is plenty of scope for teaching and learning experience to bring about a change in children's attainments.

- A third shift of knowledge has been in the area of brain functioning. When psychologists wrote about the brain as similar to a telephone exchange, association theories of learning were popular and people were thought of as having better or poorer telephone exchanges, pre-wired to do better or poorer

jobs. Without discarding the idea that people may differ in the brain structures they have to work with, it is now known that for complex functions the brain probably constructs networks which link several quite different parts of the brain and that such networks only become functional for those persons who learn to do those things. We create many of the necessary links in the brain as we learn to engage in literate activities. If we do not engage in literate activities we do not create those linked pathways.

LEARNING TO WRITE

The exploring of literacy done by preschool children is more obvious in their early attempts to write than in their attempts to read. They explore the making of marks on paper, from scribble to letter-like forms, to some letter shapes (often those found in their own name), to favorite letters and particular words, then they acquire more letters and more words. As they are exploring the possibilities of writing, they invent shapes and imaginary words. After they enter school, children work quite hard to understand the conventions of the printer's code, the "rules" of writing, and while they master some of these quite quickly, the time they take to master others (for example, spatial concepts, or the importance of letter order, or the difference that orientation of letters makes to what they stand for) is surprisingly long. (See Clay, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2014.)

Yasmín was very interested in print by her fourth birthday. Particularly intriguing are her mother's notes about what Yasmín said and did as she constructed her understandings of reading and writing.

*Mamá, puedo leer las palabras que puedo escribir.
Si puedo escribir "gato," lo puedo leer.*

*Mamá, entre más palabras puedo leer, más palabras puedo escribir.
(Four months later) Puedo escribir "gato" con mi boca (and then she sounded out ga-to slowly).*

Yasmín found things in her environment that interested her. In the garage she noticed the number 10, and her immature writing process went into action.

*Mamá, si el cero fuera una letra sería una "o."
Y si le pones una cruz en esta parte sería una "t."*

This kind of thing happened often; for Yasmín they were not exceptional remarks. Her mother asked her whether she had shown her preschool teachers how she could write. Yasmín replied, *"No, no las he mostrado. Ellas no esperan que escriba."*

Preschool children can learn about many visual features of print. They can learn how to form some letters, know how to write some words, pretend to write notes or letters to family and friends, or dictate stories they want written for them. They can do all this before they have begun to consider how the words they say may appear in print, and in particular how the sounds of speech are coded in print. Yasmín is getting close to this as she explores print for fun.

It is a challenge to work out when the written code follows clear-cut rules or when patterns of letters are repeated or when, at other times, irregular patterns may be required. It is an added challenge if you have to learn literacy in two different scripts at the same age (such as Spanish and Hebrew, or French and Chinese). Yet four- to six-year-olds do begin to grapple with these complexities if they are given opportunities to learn both literacies in their environment.

Sometimes the preschool writer gives a lot of attention to the visual forms of letters and words. Pim was a Thai child growing up in the United States. Her bilingual parents read her story books in Thai and in English, and she went to an English-language preschool. By the time she was five years two months old she read simple things in English quite well and she wrote for her teacher “BABY I LOVE YOU.” Interestingly she added to the English letters the little circles which are a feature of the Thai script.



Knowing some of the conventions of print, children can bring what they know about letters and words to bear on the writing task. For many years researchers have been exploring how well children can hear the sounds in the words they are trying to read and write because of the need to notice and learn letter-sound relationships. When they begin to notice the sounds in the words they want to write, young children usually seek someone else's help, or they invent symbols, or they use the little alphabet knowledge they have and find sounds in letter names.

So, there are many aspects of processing in writing to be learned, just as there are in reading. Writing and reading are complementary activities.

1. *Writing involves messages expressed in language.* The writer must compose these messages one letter at a time, but the message can be something he might say in everyday speech.

2. *Writing involves visual learning of letter features and letter forms, and patterns of letters in clusters or in words* – and requires the writer to combine this learning with what he knows about the conventions of the printer's code.
3. *Writing also involves the young writer listening to his own speech* – to find out which sounds he needs to write and then finding the letters with which to record those sounds.

Children take time to learn to compose messages that they want to write. At first it may not be easy for a child to compose orally what he wants to write, or wants a teacher to write for him, and the quality of composition, in telling stories or conveying information, improves as children immerse themselves in the task (Paley, 1981). There is a time during the early stages of learning to write when the child must put real effort into working out for himself how the composition can be recorded, and what he, as the writer has to do to get the story down on paper. Both the composition and the scribing aspects of the task can be approached with success by young children.

As the young writer works earnestly to put his messages on paper he is, like the young reader, working up and down the various levels at which we can analyze language – message, sentence, word, letter cluster, or letter-sound. As a reader he may ignore some of the information in print and lean upon the anchor points of the information he knows. In writing, however, there is no way to record the message other than letter by letter, one after the other; it is an analytical activity which takes words apart. He may omit letters, or use substitutes for the ones in orthodox spelling, but he is forced by the nature of the task to act analytically on print when he is writing.

The teacher of beginning writers provides opportunities and purposes for writing, engages children's interest as active participants, allows them to initiate what they can, shares the hard bits of the task with individual children and astutely anticipates when help is needed.

Many things that must be learned about printed language are shared by reading and writing. Some of these are

- moving in a left to right direction (for Spanish) and controlling serial order
- drawing on language information stored in memory
- making and recognizing visual symbols
- using visual and sound information together
- holding the message so far in mind
- drawing on the known words and structures of language
- searching, checking and correcting

and managing to bring these different activities together as a message is constructed.

The young writer explores and extends his letter knowledge, and the small set of words he knows, and tries out one or two sentence structures. A breakthrough occurs when, secure in some of these activities, the young writer begins to draw into his writing the flexibility with which he expresses himself orally.

So writing involves language but also visual information, sound sequence information, word knowledge, composing, and motor control over the production of symbols and sequences. It is sometimes necessary to lower the demands for neatness and correctness of letter formation and text layout for a time, in order to achieve a shift to flexible expression of ideas.

The blank page

Teachers and parents are apt to assume that lines on paper help children. They expect children to produce better products more quickly if given lines.

A different analysis runs like this. Some children, faced with the tasks of learning about print and how to read and write, find motor control difficult. Writing within lines forces children to carry out difficult motions of the hands and eyes. If that constraint costs them too much effort, making it harder to attend to the message they wanted to write, they are likely to avoid writing and turn their attention to something easier. Speaking, and reading, and thinking, and writing, can be learned by a child with slow or poor motor coordination, but the hand's control over movement is not easily trained, changed or coerced. One has to wait for the coordination to become possible. But even for the children who find motor tasks difficult it is desirable to press on with the learning of literacy in spite of the poor coordination.

So we offer the children opportunities to write but in the very early stages we can avoid some demands – we need not be too fussy about print size, keeping to straight lines, making it look good, and expecting the child to know already about directional rules, page layout, and punctuation. There is plenty of scope in daily writing, with a helpful teacher available, for beginning writers to learn new features of print and conform more and more to conventional expectations. Teachers do not give up their expectations for well-formed writing, but they are more patient and less demanding about the forms of the writing, and focus their teaching on the literacy knowledge to be taken aboard despite any coordination difficulties.

Using a blank page for the two *Instrumento de observación* writing assessments allows the greatest scope to those who have the least control over the writing process. And it should be remembered that the tasks described in this book are not teaching activities; they are opportunities for the child to reveal what he knows and can do.

SEEING PRINT FROM TWO VANTAGE POINTS

Most people find it difficult to think of writing and reading as two different ways of learning about the same thing – written language. It is like having two hands. (If you have ever had one hand out of action you will understand this metaphor.) What you know in writing can be helpful to your reading and vice versa, just as the right hand can help the left hand with holding and vice versa. Another analogy that comes to mind is the advantage the automobile driver gains from the side and rearview mirrors; he or she needs to drive forward but getting extra information about the situation from a different source can be a real help.

G. Phillips (personal communication, 2001) combined three important characteristics of print into an easily remembered mnemonic, DOS. A written language must be read in a certain direction (D), symbols or letters have particular orientations (O), and the rules for laying out the language information in print mean that you must attend to things in a particular sequence (S). The challenges are easily remembered with the mnemonic DOS, but there are many children who have a lot to learn in these three areas.

Independent learners

In summary, teachers aim to produce independent learners whose reading and writing improves whenever they read and write. Children become independent readers and writers when they

- have directional behaviors secure and habituated
- learn to *monitor* their own reading and writing
- *search* for several kinds of information, in word sequences, in longer stretches of meaning, and in letter sequences
- *discover* new things for themselves
- *check* that one kind of information fits with other available information
- *repeat* themselves as if to confirm what they have read or written
- *correct* themselves, taking the initiative for making any sources of information they have found fit neatly together (that is, getting words right), and
- *solve* new words by these means.

Chapter 3

Assisting young children making slow progress

Since Marie Clay began teaching children to read many years ago the challenges have remained much the same, although the services offered have increased and improved and the percentage of children needing special help *may* have been reduced. Today we have teachers, parents and communities with an awareness of the importance of early literacy learning that did not exist in the 1950s when we were trying to create it.

With the development of community interest there has been a proliferation of naïve ideas about what reading is and what reading difficulties are. Incorrect and misleading ideas are often found in the media. Critics of schools sometimes imply that people have different levels of intelligence but that all people can reach a *similar* level in reading achievement. These two expectations are contradictory. At the same time completely erroneous statements are made about words “seen in reverse” or “the brain scrambling the signals going to the eyes” or “squares that look like triangles.” There is no evidence to support such descriptions of how our brain works during reading.

These errors of understanding arise from adults who make superficial or poor observations of their own skills or who disseminate misguided interpretations of new concepts which are only partly understood.

Fortunately, this does not have to be the case any longer. Since the 1980s, with new understandings and new practices, we have seen the development of more effective solutions in the area of early interventions. We have reached a point where it is possible to hypothesize that all but a very small number of children can learn to read and write. Schools are able to implement interventions which can bring this about.

Progress has more to do with engagement in large quantities of successful reading than with exercises in decoding texts which are hard to read. Teachers and education systems should make every effort to reduce the number of children falling below their class level in reading, and public opinion must be kept informed so that non-teachers are able to ask appropriate evaluation questions.

In the past, a teacher of children in their fourth year of school could expect a range of reading achievement in her classroom that spread across five or six years. Among her eight- to nine-year-old children there would be able children who read like young high school students and other children reading like children in the first year of school. The highest achievements come about in part because once a certain command of reading is attained, reading improves every time one reads. There will always be a range of reading achievement for which the class teacher must provide.

Now schools aim to have all children master the fundamentals of literacy learning by about the age of nine years so that almost every child will be able to read and write at levels expected of his or her age group. One way in which the range of achievement could be narrowed would be by lifting the competence of the children in the lower third of the achievement range. This has come to be very important.

If, after that, all children at every point in the new range of normal variation are increasing their level of achievement (even though that achievement will still vary widely because of the high achievers), then the school will be doing its job well. However, not all children will be able to read in the same way or at the same level any more than they can all think alike. And the complexities of the language will leave teachers with a full curriculum of things to which their students must be introduced.

Good literacy instruction

The first requirement of a good literacy program is that all teachers check the provisions that they make for the lowest groups in their classes. Is the program really catering for the full range of literacy knowledge in this class of children? *For learning to occur it is very important to ensure that the difficulty level of the reading material presents challenges from which the child can learn and not difficulties that disorganize what he already knows.* If children making slow progress are not reading for meaning, if what they read does not sound like spoken language, if they are stuttering over sounds or words with no basis for problem-solving the text, they should be taken back to a level of literacy tasks where they can orchestrate all their reading responses into a smoothly functioning message-getting process, and all their writing responses into a smoothly functioning message-construction process. (They will read fairly accurately with about one error in ten words and write sentences they have composed for themselves.)

Each classroom needs a wide range of reading books to cater for the expected range of reading skills. All children need both easy and challenging books from which they learn different things. Just as you might find it relaxing on holiday to pick up a light novel, a detective story or a science fiction book, competent readers enjoy easy reading too. On easy material they practice the skills they have and build up fluency.

Perhaps one or two children in the lowest group do not seem to be able to read anything. It may be that they have been forced to read at frustration level for as long as a year or two, and they may even have lost touch with some of their initial reading competencies. They can go backwards later in their schooling too, not reading as well as they did at an earlier age. Children whose paths of progress are very different from that of their classmates may need individual teaching if they are to develop as independent readers of new books.

A useful rule of thumb is to accept that skillful readers and writers can work well on their own if a teacher is available to do a little explaining and teaching at critical points when they encounter a difficulty. But as we go further down a scale of reading ability students will need more and more of the teacher's time as they learn to pull together all that they need to know to read well, and to apply it when necessary to their problem-solving. The poorer the reader, the more individual teaching time that learner will require. Poorer writers will also need regular and frequent opportunities to write with ready access to a teacher's help.

In a teacher's lowest reading groups there could be one or more children who have had remedial lessons two and three times a week for several years yet have not caught up to their peers. They may improve in reading skills but do not usually make up for those years of learning at a very slow rate and the associated sense of failure. They missed the opportunity to receive an early literacy intervention during the first years of school. Often this missed opportunity is blamed on the child, his attitude, ability or attendance. More probably, in the majority of cases, schools did not arrange for early intervention to be available to the child.

What are the ingredients of a good reading and writing program for low-achieving children in classroom settings? For a good program you need a very experienced teacher who has been trained to think incisively about processing in reading and writing and who is sensitive to individual differences; a teacher who has continued to seek professional development and understands the literacy issues of the day, and the particular program the school is delivering. You need a school which organizes for class teachers to give individual attention to the children who have made the least progress, especially in the first two years of school. The teacher carefully sequences the tasks and reading materials to meet the learning needs of each child, and she helps and supports the pupil to read and write successfully most of the time.

A SELF-EXTENDING SYSTEM OF LITERACY LEARNING

The teacher aims to produce in the pupil a set of behaviors which will ensure a self-extending system for literacy learning. What does that mean? As children move up a gradient of difficulty in texts they develop ways of extending their own competencies so that the more they read or write, the better they get at reading harder texts of increasingly diverse types. The teacher lifts the motivation and challenge, and designs rich opportunities for students to explore increasingly complex texts, but the reader or writer begins to shape his own progress. The teacher expects to end up with pupils who are as widely distributed in reading and writing achievement as they are in the population in intelligence, mathematical achievement, sporting skills or cooking prowess. But each pupil should be making progress from where he is to somewhere else.

Frequently, someone approaches me with this kind of statement: “I’m not a teacher but I would like to help children with reading difficulties. Do you think I could?” My answer is that the best person to help a child with reading difficulties is a trained teacher who has become a master teacher of literacy and who has been trained as a specialist in developing readers and writers with self-extending systems. There are a few ways for para-professionals to work with children with literacy difficulties; they might listen to them read many little books or texts that they can read easily, encourage and motivate them to read and write more, prompt and help them with a new word or two, read harder material to them and write the hard-to-spell parts of their writing.

But an expert teacher is needed to expose the child to attempting the harder tasks which challenge the learner to lift his competency to work well on higher level texts, and to teach the child how to develop a self-extending system that will, in time, take over the role of expanding current competencies. Unlike many human conditions, failure to read and write almost never ends in spontaneous recovery.

Early intervention

What we understand about how we learn to read and about the reading process itself has changed as a result of many reports and from intensive research efforts. While the techniques recommended by the older research scholars still have validity (for example, Fernald, 1943), their understanding of the reading process is dated. Theorists now look upon literacy processing in a different way and that makes many of the older texts on reading less useful today. It is not enough to work with old concepts and cures to solve reading difficulties. We now have very good reasons for discarding some old concepts that led to ineffective teaching.

If Marie Clay believed, for example, that visual images of words had to be implanted by repetition in children’s minds, and that a child had to know every set of letter-sound relationships that occur in English words before he could progress in reading books, then she could not explain some of her successes as a teacher. Clay could not explain how an 11-year-old with a reading age of eight years could make three years’ progress in reading in six months, having two short lessons each week. It just would not be possible. A good theory ought at least to be able to explain its successes.

When Marie Clay surveyed research reports which measured children’s reading before remedial work, after their programs, and then after a follow-up period, the results were almost always the same. Progress was made while the teacher taught, but little progress occurred back in the classroom once the clinical programs had finished (Aman & Singh, 1983). The children usually did not continue to progress without the remedial teacher. They were not learning to read the way that successful readers learn. Successful readers learn a system of behaviors which continues to accumulate skills merely because it

operates. (Exceptional reading clinicians do help children to build self-extending systems but they do not seem to do this frequently enough to influence the research findings.)

In the past we operated with a concept of remedial tuition that worked but did not work well enough. There were clinicians, principals, teachers, and willing folk in the community working earnestly and with commitment. Individual children received help but the size of the problem had not been reduced. Some children were recovered, others were maintained with some improvement and some continued to fail.

Why was this so? Lack of early identification was one reason. In other areas of special educational needs we practiced early identification. Babies and preschoolers who are deaf, or blind, who have cerebral palsy, or other kinds of special needs, get expert help to minimize the consequential aspects of their handicaps. Yet a child with reading difficulties had to wait until the third or fourth year of school before being offered special instruction. By then the child's reading level was two years behind that of his peers. The learning difficulties of the child might have been more easily overcome if he had practiced error behavior less often, if he had less to unlearn and relearn, and if he still had reasonable confidence in his own ability. Schools must change their organization to solve these problems early. It takes a child with even the most supportive teacher only three to four months at school to define himself as "no good at that" when the timetable comes around to reading or writing activities.

Teachers and parents of 11- to 16-year-olds often believe that schools have done nothing for the reading or writing difficulties of the young people they are concerned about. Yet the older child has probably been the focus of a whole sequence of well-intentioned efforts to help, each of which has done little for the child. This does not mean that children do not sometimes succeed with a brilliant teacher, a fantastic teacher-child relationship, or a hardworking parent-child team. What it does mean is that the efforts often fail for want of expert training of the teacher, and for want of persistence and continuity of efforts. They often fail because those efforts are started too late.

It seemed to me that the longer we left the child failing, the harder the problem became and three years was too long. The results of waiting are these.

- There is a greater gap or deficit to be made up.
- There are consequential deficits in other aspects of education.
- There are consequences for the child's personality and confidence.
- An even greater problem is that the child has tried to do the assigned tasks, has practiced his primitive skills and has tried to combine his skills in ways that are not effective; the prior learning stands like a block wall between the remedial teacher and the responses that she is trying to get established.

In any remedial intervention delivered later in the child's schooling the teacher will have to spend much time helping the pupil to unlearn many of his ways of working. Why have we tended to wait until the child was eight or more years old before offering special assistance?

- We believed, erroneously, that children mature into reading.
- We did not like to pressure children, and we gave them time to settle.
- We knew children were "late bloomers" (or we thought we did).
- Our tests were not reliable until our programs were well under way and we were hesitant to label children wrongly or to use scarce remedial resources on children who would recover spontaneously.
- We did not understand literacy processing in reading and writing well enough.
- We thought a change of method, or searching for the magic solution, would one day make the reading problem disappear.
- We believed in simple single causes such as "not having learned his alphabet," or "letter-sound relationships."
- Teachers found it difficult to identify which children were having trouble at the end of the first year of instruction, and often believed that there were no such children in their schools.
- A child has traditionally been considered worthy of special help only if his achievement falls more than two years below the average for his class or age group. That criterion has more to do with the reliability of our achievement test instruments than with any particular learning needs of the children.

In 1962 when Marie began her research she asked the simple question "Can we see that something in the process of learning to read is going awry in the first year of instruction?" It was, in terms of the techniques at the time, an absurd question. The answer is, however, that today this *can* be observed by the well-trained teacher. And it is much simpler than administering batteries of psychological tests or trying to interpret the implications of neurological examinations with respect to the activity of reading.

At the end of the first year at school (and also at the end of a preparatory year for five-year-olds) teachers can identify children who seem to need extra help and resources to learn some basic skills and concepts and to unlearn unwanted behaviors, or to put together isolated behaviors into a workable system.

Simple observation tasks like those in the *Instrumento de observación* will predict well which young children who have been in instruction for one year have become readers and writers "at risk." The children's performance on the tasks also gives the teacher some idea of what to teach next. The second year at school can then be used as a time to catch up with the average group of readers and writers in classrooms.

THE SENSITIVE OBSERVATION OF LITERACY BEHAVIOR

The first steps to prevent literacy learning difficulties can be taken in any school system. Sensitive observation of what school entrants can do and careful observation, at frequent intervals, of children's responsiveness to a good school program can reveal many individual differences. Researchers are still trying to develop tests that will predict which children are likely to have difficulty, but all such tests must, of necessity, be prone to error because they try to estimate how well a child will perform in an activity he has not even had the opportunity to explore.

Instead of using tests to make predictions about something the child has not yet encountered, researchers can use systematic observation of what children are doing as they perform literacy-related tasks in new entrant classrooms. Observation of children's behavior is a sound basis for the early evaluation of literacy progress. Children may stray off into unhelpful responses at many points during the first year of instruction.

Marie Clay refers here to a controlled form of observation which requires systematic, objective recording of exactly what a child does on a particular (sometimes contrived) task. It must be carried out without any accompanying teaching or teacher guidance. This contrasts with several less effective practices – observation while teaching, casual or subjective observation, or judgmental conclusions based on remembered events from fleeting observations while teaching a group of children.

A flexible program which respects individuality at first can bring children gradually to the point where group instruction can be provided for those with common learning needs. In schools which have new entrant or reception classes this is one of the main roles of their teachers.

Of 100 children studied in one Auckland-based study (Clay, 1966, 1982), there were children making slow progress because of poor language development whose real problem lay in their inability to form and repeat phrases and sentences. There were many children who wavered for months trying to establish a consistent directional approach to print. There were children who could not hear the separation of words within a spoken sentence, nor the sequence of sounds that occur in words. Some children attended only to the final sounds in words. Two left-handed writers had some persisting problems with direction, but so did several right-handed children. For some children with poor motor coordination the matching of words and spaces with speech was a very difficult task. But other children with fast speech and mature language could not achieve success either, because they could not slow down their speech to their hand speed. They needed help with coordinating their visual perception to print and their fast speech. There were unhappy children who were reticent about speaking or writing, and rebellious and resistant children. There were children of low intelligence who made slow progress with enthusiasm, and there were others with high intelligence who worked diligently and yet were seldom accurate. There were those who lost heart when promoted because they felt they were not able to cope, and others who lost heart because they were kept behind in a lower reading group.

While sensitive observation during the first year is the responsibility of the class teacher, a survey of reading and writing progress after one year of instruction should be undertaken by the school team of teachers to catch any child beginning to stray from a quality path of progress. Many education authorities want to carry out school entry assessment and this might guide the first year of instruction but, if time and resources are short, *the most critical time in the life of a reader or writer is a year after instruction has begun*. This survey is held to be desirable and practical, in addition to the observations made by class teachers.

A year at school will have given all children a chance to settle, to begin to engage with the literacy program, to try several different approaches, to be forming good or bad habits. It will not be hurrying children unduly to take stock of their style of progress a year after society introduces them to formal instruction. Indeed, early intervention must then be made available for any children who have been unable to learn from the standard teaching practices. This makes good psychological and administrative sense.

The timing of such a systematic survey will depend upon the policies of the education system regarding

- entry to school
- promotion and/or retention.

In New Zealand continuous entry on children's fifth birthdays is usually followed by fixed annual promotion at the third-year class level. This allows a flexible time allocation of 18 to 36 months for a child to complete the first two class levels according to their individual needs. A slow progress child who takes a year to settle into the strange environment of school may need extra help in the second year to make average progress before promotion to a third-year class.

A different scenario would occur with fixed age of entry. Children entering school at one time (four-and-a-half to five-and-a-half to six-and-a-half) would be surveyed within or after their first year at school. My preference would be for them to receive individual help at the beginning of the second year, having been promoted rather than retained. An alternative would be to get help to them after six months of the first year on the assumption that they could be promoted to the second-year class rather than retained. This latter approach may identify children for help who would "take off" unassisted in the second six months of that first year of school.

In school systems where entry occurs at younger ages, more relaxed and less urgent policies can be adopted. In systems where entry age levels are higher, formal instruction tends to proceed with more urgency and waiting for a year before identifying children may not be seen as appropriate. The key point to bear in mind is that children must not be left practicing inappropriate behaviors for too long. On the other hand they cannot be

pressured or hurried into earning the fundamental complexities of reading and writing.

This leads us back to thinking about children who are having difficulty with school learning towards the end of their first year at school. Each will differ from others in what they find confusing, what gaps there are in their knowledge, and in how they operate on print. The child making very slow progress might respond to an intervention especially tailored to his needs in one-to-one instruction. Well-designed individual instruction can provide a very fast route to performing effectively alongside peers.

THE EARLY DETECTION OF LITERACY LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Traditionally, literacy difficulties have been assessed with readiness tests, intelligence tests, and tests of related skills such as language abilities, visual discrimination, phonemic awareness or spelling. These have been used to predict areas which might account for a child's reading failure. The problem with the intricate profiles that such tests produce is that, while they may sketch some strengths and weaknesses in the child's behavior repertoire, they do not provide much guidance as to what the teacher should try to teach the child during reading activities. The child with limited language skills must still be taught to read, although some authorities advise teachers to wait until the child can speak well. The child with visual perception difficulties could be put on a program of drawing shapes and finding paths through mazes and puzzles, but he must still be taught to read.

Many research studies have found no benefit resulting from training programs derived directly from such test results. Training non-readers on pictures or geometric shapes did not produce the necessary gains in reading skill; and oral language training was no more useful. This may well be because the children were learning to analyze data which they were unable to relate to their reading tasks. Again and again research points to the egocentric, rigid and inflexible viewpoint of the younger, slower reader. And yet statements on remediation just as often recommend training the child on "simpler" materials – pictures, shapes, letters, sounds – all of which require a large amount of skill to transfer to the total situation of reading a message which is expressed in sentence form!

Trying to train children to read on pictures and shapes or even on puzzles seems a devious route to reading. One would not deny that many children need a wide range of supplementary activities to compensate for restricted preschool lives; but it is foolish to prepare for reading by painting with large brushes, doing jigsaw puzzles, arranging large building blocks, or writing numbers. Entry to reading can be done more directly with written language (Clay, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c).

Having established that printed text is the remedial medium, one can then allow that simplification, right down to the parts of the letters, may at times be required for some

children. However, the larger the chunks of printed language the child can work with, the more quickly he learns and the richer the network of personal experience he can bring to the learning task. We should only dwell on detail long enough for the child to discover its existence, and encourage its use in isolation only when that is essential for completing this task or for further learning.

The young reader needs to use the detail from the information within a stretch of print. But the relationships of details to patterns in reading have often been destroyed by our methods of instruction. It is so easy for us as teachers and superb readers or for the designers of reading materials, to achieve that destruction.

There have been many attempts to match teaching methods to the strengths of groups of children. The child with good visual perception is said to benefit from sight-word methods; the child with good phonemic awareness (previously assessed as auditory perception) is thought to make better progress on phonological methods. One author writes, "Children are physiologically oriented to visual or auditory learning." Another says, "Teaching phonics as a relatively 'pure' form will place a child at a disadvantage if he is delayed in auditory perceptual ability!" An emphasis on letter formation in writing can direct the learner's attention to the fingers and eyes and *away* from hearing language. Instruction which emphasizes one information source as paramount over all others places all children at a severe disadvantage. To become successful readers and writers, they would have to learn by themselves many skills that their teachers were not teaching.

Such matching attempts are simplistic, for Spanish is a complex linguistic system. The way to use a child's strengths and improve his weaknesses is not to specialize in one aspect or another but to design the tasks so that he practices the weakness with the aid of his strong abilities. Rather than take sides on reading methods which deal either with sounds that are synthesized or with sentences which are analyzed, it is appropriate to select reading texts with the next three points in mind.

- The text must be easy enough for the learner to bring his existing competencies to the current task.
- Any and every text will contain phonemic richness.
- The semantic and syntactic richness of the text will allow the learner to bring his speaking abilities to the synthesis and analysis of what he is reading.

Close observation of a child's weaknesses will be needed because he will depend on the teacher to structure the task in simple steps to avoid the accumulation of confusions. For one child the structuring may be in the visual perception area. For another it may be in sentence patterns. For a third it may be in the discrimination of sound sequences. For a fourth it may be in directional learning. *It is most likely to be in the bringing together of all these ways of responding, as the reader works sequentially through a text.*

It therefore seems appropriate to seek diagnosis of those aspects of literacy processing which are weak in a particular child soon after he has entered instruction. The Observation Survey has been used to provide such information for children taught in very different programs for beginning reading and writing (in New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States). Similarly, the *Instrumento de observación* has been used in the United States. The *Instrumento de observación* provides a framework within which early reading and writing behavior can be explored irrespective of the method of instruction. What will vary will be the typical scores on the tasks of the survey after a fixed time at school. Children in different teaching programs do not score in similar ways.

In what follows there is only slight emphasis on scores and the quantifying of progress. The real value of the tasks in the *Instrumento de observación* is to uncover what a particular child controls and what operations and features of print he could be taught next.

LITERACY PROCESSING

Literacy instruction often focuses on items of knowledge – words, letters and sounds. Most children respond to this teaching in active ways. They search for links between the items and they relate new discoveries to old knowledge. They operate on print as Piaget's children operated on problems, searching for relationships which order the complexity of print and therefore simplify it.

A kind of end-point of early instruction has been reached when children have a self-extending system of literacy behaviors which means that they learn more about reading and writing every time they read and write, independent of instruction. When they read texts of appropriate difficulty for their present skills, using their knowledge of oral and written language and their knowledge of the world, they use a set of operations or strategic activities “in their heads” which are just adequate for reading or writing the more difficult bits of the text. In the process they engage in problem-solving, a deliberate effort to solve new problems using familiar information and procedures.

The term *literacy processing* is used for mental activities initiated by the child to problem-solve the puzzle of getting the messages from a text, or putting messages into texts.

They notice new things about words, and constructively link these things to what they know about the world around them, and/or about printed language in simple books. Their processing is progressive and cumulative. The newly noticed feature of print, worked on today, becomes the reference point for another encounter in a few days. “*Teléfono*” as a new word becomes a reference point for “*televisor*” in a subsequent text. Children are working on two theories – their theory of the world and what will make sense, and

a second of how written language is created. They are testing these two theories and changing them successively as they read more books and write down messages they have composed.

What children control

1. A child may have the necessary abilities but may not have learned how to use those abilities in reading. He does not make useful moves to solve his own problems. He must learn how to work effectively with the information in print.
2. A child may have made insufficient development in one ability area (say, motor coordination) to carry out some new operation (say, use the directional schema for reading Spanish) without special help. *He must learn how to ... in spite of...* A special teacher knows how to analyze the task and help him do that learning.
3. Again, a child may have items of knowledge about letters and sounds and words but be unable to relate one to the other, to employ one (say, letters) as a check on the other (say, words), in order to get to the messages in print. He must learn how to check on his own learning, and how to orchestrate different ways of responding to complete a successful message-getting process.

In any of these instances the task for the reading/writing program is to get the child to learn to use any and all of the processing activities that are necessary to read text of a given level of difficulty. There is an important assumption in this approach. Strategic activities for solving novel features in print (that is, things this reader has not encountered before) are an important part of a reading experience.

Constructing self-extending systems

By solving a novel feature of print the competent reader not only gets the message but at the same time may extend his capacity to tackle new messages. I have called this a self-extending processing system; it is what the novice reader is putting together, and what competent readers have achieved when they are about to move into silent reading and massive amounts of recreational reading. Given a knowledge of some items and some strategic awareness of how to work on print, the reader can apply what he knows to similar items. He has a way of working on new features of print; we do not need to teach him the total inventory. Using what he knows so far about how print works can lead the reader to assimilate new items of knowledge, or help the writer to generate new ways of getting to new words. Problem-solving novel features of print is an important part of constructing self-extending systems for reading and writing.

An example may help to clarify this important concept. Teachers through the years have taught children the relationship of letters and sounds. They have traditionally shown letters and given children opportunities to associate sounds with those letters. There seemed to be an obvious need to help the child to translate the letters in his book into the sounds of spoken words. And, in some vague way, this also helps the child to use the sounds in his speech to extend his spelling and story writing.

In our studies of children after one year of instruction we found children who were making slow progress in reading who could give the sounds of letters but found it impossible to hear the sound sequences in the spoken words. They had been taught to go from letters to sounds but they were unable to check whether they were right because they could not hear the sound sequence in the words they spoke. They were unable to find the sounds in their speech and find letters for recording them. Being able to carry out the first operation, letters to sounds, probably leads easily to its inverse for many children but for some children at risk, being able to go from letter to sound did not lead to going from a sound to a letter by which to record that sound.¹

An approach to literacy learning which emphasizes the acquisition of strategic activities to problem-solve novel aspects of print bypasses questions of reading ages. It demands the recording of what the child does when processing texts of specified difficulty; it refers to the strengths and weaknesses of the strategic moves made, and compares these with a model of similar behaviors used by children who make satisfactory progress in reading. It assumes that the learner gradually constructs a network of strategic activities for working on printed information which at some point becomes a self-extending system of literacy processing by about the time that he or she is ready to shift to mostly silent reading and independent writing of quality stories. It ensures that the learner can continue to learn to read by reading, and to learn to write by writing.

It seems to be possible to lose literacy abilities in much the same way that we lose our fluency in a foreign language if we no longer have the opportunity to speak it. Schools must lift literacy competencies to where people will use, retain and continue to expand them in their everyday life activities, when they are reading the paper, messages or instructions, writing or working on the Internet.

¹ Arising from such observations in the Reading Recovery research and development project in 1976-77, along with the research of Chomsky (1972), Elkonin (1973), Mattingly (1972), and Read (1975), a task assessing phonemic awareness was added to *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties* (Clay, 1979a, 1985), *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 1993a, 2002, 2013, 2019), the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* (Escamilla et al., 1996), and the teaching of phonemic awareness was built into the writing section of the daily Reading Recovery and Descubriendo la Lectura lesson.

Chapter 4

Bilingual education and early intervention in the United States

UNDERSTANDING BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MODELS

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2024), 5.3 million public school students are identified as multilingual learners in our schools, and Spanish is the home language for about 76% of these students. Over the past quarter-century, this population has grown by more than one million students, representing a sizable demographic shift in American education (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2020). Spanish ranks as the second most common language in the United States, spoken in the households of roughly 13% of the population, and this number continues to grow with more than 1.9 million new Spanish speakers added since 2018 (Language Testing International, 2025). As this population continues to expand and research increasingly demonstrates the academic advantages of bilingual approaches, educators and policymakers must understand the theoretical foundations and practical applications that can transform educational outcomes for multilingual learners.

Pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade elementary classrooms contain the highest number of multilingual learners (Torres Elías, 2018), prompting schools across the United States to implement a variety of instructional models to support these learners. These models vary significantly in their approach to language instruction, components, duration, and educational goals, ranging from programs that focus exclusively on English acquisition to those that aim for true bilingualism and biliteracy. The selection and implementation of these instructional models are heavily influenced by policy decisions at district, state, and federal levels (García & Kleifgen, 2018).

García & Kleifgen (2018) outline several key program models used across these contexts. Each model and its variations are described in the following sections.

Submersion program models

Submersion programs represent the most assimilationist approach to educating multilingual learners. In this model, students are placed in mainstream classrooms where instruction occurs exclusively in English, with no specialized support for language learners. Teachers typically lack specific training for working with multilingual learners, and the program continues throughout the K-12 education experience. The singular goal is linguistic assimilation, with students expected to shift entirely to English without maintenance of their home language. This approach was popular before 1970 but is still

used in parts of the United States where English-only initiatives are enforced.

English as a Second Language program models

English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a New Language (ENL) programs represent an improvement over submersion programs by acknowledging students' need for language support. These programs come in several variations: pull-out ESL, push-in ESL and structured English immersion.

Pull-out ESL maintains students in mainstream English classrooms but pulls them out for 30-45 minutes of daily ESL instruction. Instruction remains 90-100% in English, though some home language support may be provided. Teachers of pull-out ESL must hold specialized certification. The program's duration varies according to student needs. Like submersion, the goal remains linguistic assimilation with remedial English support. Push-in ESL involves bringing ESL teachers into the mainstream setting to work alongside classroom teachers rather than removing students from their regular classroom. This approach maintains the 90-100% English instruction with possible home language support but offers the advantage of contextualizing language learning within content instruction. Teachers must hold specialized certification and the program continues as needed, focusing on linguistic assimilation and remedial English instruction within the mainstream classroom.

Structured English immersion, also known as sheltered English or content-based ESL, provides subject-matter instruction at students' level of English proficiency, with students grouped according to their language ability. 90-100% of instruction occurs in English with potential home language support. Teachers should have specialized certification with some training in immersion techniques. This type of program usually lasts one to three years, aiming for linguistic assimilation and exit to mainstream education.

Bilingual program models

Unlike the previous models that prioritize English acquisition, bilingual programs utilize students' home languages as resources in the educational process. The variations of bilingual programs are transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, and two-way bilingual education.

Transitional bilingual education, also known as early-exit bilingual education, initially provides 50-90% of instruction in students' home language with 10-50% in English. Over time, the ratio shifts dramatically, reducing home language to just 10% while increasing English to 90%. Components include initial literacy instruction in the home language, some subject instruction in the home language, ESL instruction, and sheltered English subject instruction. Programs typically last one to three years, with students exiting as

they become proficient in English. While this model aims for linguistic assimilation and English acquisition, it attempts to do so without students falling behind academically.

The models discussed thus far are considered subtractive because their ultimate goal is English monolingualism rather than bilingualism. Even transitional bilingual education, while initially developing students' home language abilities, is designed to phase out instruction in that language once English proficiency is achieved (Torres Elías, 2018).

Developmental bilingual education, also known as late-exit bilingual education, or one-way dual language bilingual education begins with approximately 90% instruction in the home language, gradually decreasing to about 50%, with the remainder of the instruction in English. Home language subject matter instruction remains consistently available for the duration of the program. Alternatively, some late-exit bilingual programs maintain a 50/50 split from the beginning. Initial literacy development occurs in the home language, with English introduced simultaneously. Both ESL and subject matter instruction are provided at students' English proficiency level by teachers certified in bilingual education. These programs last at least five to six years and aim for true bilingualism and biliteracy alongside academic achievement in English.

Two-way bilingual education (also known as two-way dual language bilingual education, dual language bilingual education, two-way immersion bilingual education, and dual-immersion bilingual education) brings together English speakers and speakers of another language in balanced numbers. In the 90/10 model, 90% of instruction occurs in the partner language initially, with 10% in English during early grades. The 50/50 model maintains equal instructional time in both languages throughout, and teachers must be certified in bilingual education. These programs last at least five to six years and are more prevalent at the elementary level. Like developmental bilingual education, they aim for bilingualism, biliteracy, and academic achievement in English for all participants.

Unlike subtractive models, these additive approaches allow students to develop bilingual proficiency by enabling students to acquire English while continuing to strengthen and expand their home language capabilities (Torres Elías, 2018).

The variety of bilingual education program models reflects an evolving understanding of second language acquisition, the role of the first language in cognitive development, and sociopolitical factors influencing educational policy. Research consistently demonstrates that programs promoting additive bilingualism, those that develop students' home languages while building English proficiency, yield superior academic outcomes compared to subtractive approaches that focus solely on English acquisition. Longitudinal research has documented that students in long-term bilingual programs significantly outperform their peers in English-only programs by middle school (Collier & Thomas, 2017; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

As schools serve increasingly diverse student populations, educators and policymakers must carefully consider program models that align with their education philosophy, available resources, and commitment to equitable education for all students. The most effective programs recognize students' home languages as valuable resources, creating learning environments where linguistic diversity becomes an asset rather than a liability.

A HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Bilingual education in the United States has evolved significantly over time, shaped by legislative actions, court decisions, and changing attitudes in society towards diversity. This section explores the key historical developments that have influenced bilingual education policies and practices in American schools. The following historical overview of bilingual education policy draws from García and Kleifgen's (2018) comprehensive analysis of legislative and judicial developments.

While bilingual instruction existed in various forms throughout early American history, modern bilingual education policy began to take shape during the Civil Rights Movement. The landmark 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* established that segregated educational facilities were inherently unequal, setting the foundation for equal opportunity for all students, including those speaking a non-English language.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, particularly Title VI, further advanced educational equity by prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance. This legislation became a crucial legal foundation for multilingual learners seeking equal educational opportunities.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 marked the first major federal intervention specifically for education. Its 1968 amendment, known as the Bilingual Education Act (Title VII), officially recognized the needs of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students (these students are now referred to as multilingual learners or bilingual learners) and provided federal funding for bilingual education programs. This represented the first official federal acknowledgement of the unique educational challenges faced by multilingual learners.

In 1974, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) established the obligation of educational agencies to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation in instructional programs. That same year, the Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized, expanding eligibility criteria and program options while emphasizing the importance of teaching both English and the student's home language.

The 1974 Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* proved transformative for bilingual education. Chinese students in San Francisco alleged that they were denied equal educational opportunities due to their limited English proficiency. The Court unanimously ruled that identical education does not constitute equal education under Title VI. Following this decision, in 1975 the Department of Health, Education and Welfare issued the Lau Remedies, which provided specific compliance standards for schools with multilingual learners.

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a significant shift toward English-only instruction in several states. California's Proposition 227 in 1998 effectively eliminated most bilingual education programs in the state and required that "LEP students" be taught primarily through structured English immersion programs. Crawford (2004) documented how these English-only initiatives represented a coordinated political campaign that capitalized on anti-immigrant sentiment while ignoring research evidence supporting bilingual education's effectiveness. Arizona's Proposition 203 in 2000 and similar legislation in Massachusetts in 2002 followed this model, severely restricting bilingual education options. Notably, a similar measure in Colorado failed to pass, indicating varying public opinions on bilingual education across states.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 replaced the Bilingual Education Act with Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students). This shift changed the focus from home language maintenance to English acquisition and accountability through standardized testing.

The development of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010 established consistent educational standards across many states but presented challenges for multilingual learners due to the high language demands of the standards. In response, assessment consortia like WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) and ELPA21 (English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century) developed standards and assessments specifically addressing the needs of multilingual learners.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 replaced NCLB and returned significant control to states regarding educational policy, including approaches to multilingual learner education. While maintaining accountability requirements, ESSA acknowledged the importance of bilingualism and biliteracy as valuable assets.

A notable recent development has been the emergence of Seals of Biliteracy, which are awards given by educational authorities to students who have attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. First implemented in California in 2011, these seals recognize bilingualism as an achievement and asset rather than a deficit, representing a significant shift in perspective.

The history of bilingual education in the United States reflects broader societal debates about immigration, national identity and educational equity. From the Civil Rights Era's emphasis on educational access to more recent recognition of bilingualism as an asset, bilingual education policies continue to evolve in response to changing demographics, research findings, and political currents. As Crawford (2004) observes, this history reveals ongoing tensions between research-based practices and political pressures, with educational decisions often driven by ideological rather than pedagogical considerations. As linguistic diversity in American schools continues to grow, the ongoing development of effective, equitable approaches to bilingual education remains a critical educational challenge.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

While historical and legislative developments have shaped the implementation of bilingual education in the United States, a strong theoretical framework provides the rationale for the pedagogical strength of bilingual approaches. Drawing from García and Kleifgen (2018), this section examines key theoretical constructs that support bilingual education, incorporating research from leading scholars in the field.

Jim Cummins's work has been foundational in establishing the theoretical basis for bilingual education. His concept of linguistic interdependence posits that proficiency in one language transfers to another, challenging the notion that languages compete for cognitive resources (Cummins, 1979). Rather than viewing a bilingual student's languages as separate entities, Cummins proposed the concept of common underlying proficiency, often visualized as a dual iceberg where surface features of languages may differ while being supported by shared cognitive processes beneath the surface. According to Cummins (2000), this shared cognitive foundation means that conceptual learning that occurs in one language benefits the development of both languages. For example, a student who learns syllable awareness in Spanish, such as identifying that 'ca-sa' has two syllables and can blend and segment words at the syllable level, does not need to relearn the concept of syllabication in English. The underlying ability to recognize that words are composed of syllables and to manipulate these units transfers across languages. Cummins (1984) further distinguishes between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language, which typically develops within one to two years of exposure. CALP refers to the language skills needed for academic success, abstract thinking, analysis and specialized vocabulary. Research by Cummins (2000) and others has consistently shown that developing academic language proficiency requires approximately five to seven years under optimal conditions (Thomas & Collier, 2002). This time frame has significant implications for educational policy and practice, challenging the assumption that brief transitional programs can adequately prepare

students for academic success in a second language.

Brian Street's work on literacy as social practice provides another theoretical pillar for bilingual education. Moving beyond a view of language as a neutral set of skills, Street (1985, 2005) conceptualized language use, particularly academic language, as a series of social practices embedded within power relations and cultural contexts. From this perspective, students do not simply learn language, they "do language" within specific social settings. Street's (1985) literacy model highlights how traditional approaches often treat language as a decontextualized technical skill, while in reality language use is always situated within particular social contexts and power dynamics. This understanding informs bilingual approaches that value students' linguistic resources and connect academic language to their lived experiences.

Most recent theoretical developments have challenged linear models of language acquisition. García (2009) proposed the concept of dynamic bilingualism, viewing a bilingual learner's language practices as an integrated system rather than two separate monolingual systems. This perspective recognizes that bilinguals do not simply switch between two static language systems but rather draw on their full linguistic repertoire in fluid and dynamic ways. Translanguaging emerges from this theoretical framework as both a pedagogical approach and a description of how bilinguals naturally use language (García & Wei, 2014; Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015). Translanguaging describes the complex language practices of bilingual learners who access different linguistic features from a single integrated repertoire. In practice, translanguaging involves strategic use of a student's full linguistic repertoire to maximize understanding, participation and learning (García et al., 2017). Unlike traditional code-switching models that view language as two separate systems that bilingual students alternate between, translanguaging theory posits that bilinguals have one linguistic system with features that society artificially categorizes as belonging to separate languages (García et al., 2017; García & Wei, 2014). This perspective has profound implications for classroom practice, suggesting that rigid language separation may not always be optimal for bilingual learners.

Building on García's theoretical framework, Kathy Escamilla and colleagues (2014) have provided empirical evidence that demonstrates that bilingualism is not a linear process where one language develops at the expense of the other or where languages develop in parallel but separate tracks. Instead, bilingual development is dynamic, recursive, and highly contextual. Escamilla's research on Spanish-English biliteracy development has shown how skills develop uniquely in bilingual contexts, often following different pathways than monolingual development in either language (Escamilla et al., 2014; Escamilla, 2015). This work has led to instructional approaches that build on cross-linguistic connections rather than keeping languages rigidly separated.

The theoretical foundations of bilingual education have evolved markedly over the past four decades, moving from deficit-oriented frameworks to asset-based approaches that

recognize the cognitive, academic and social advantages of bilingualism. This theoretical evolution continues to inform more effective and equitable bilingual approaches that treat students' linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a problem to overcome.

A RATIONALE FOR EARLY BILINGUAL INTERVENTION IN THE UNITED STATES

The historical developments, program models and theoretical foundations discussed in previous sections come together to provide a compelling rationale for early intervention for multilingual students who need additional literacy support. As research continues to demonstrate the advantages of bilingual approaches, there is growing recognition that early intervention services for young multilingual learners should incorporate and build upon their home language rather than focusing exclusively on English acquisition. The alignment between intervention and the language of instruction is critical. Children receiving instruction in Spanish or in dual language programs benefit most from interventions that utilize and develop their Spanish language skills rather than interventions delivered only in English (Escamilla et al., 2014; Goldenberg, 2008).

Research in developmental psychology and neuroscience has established that early childhood represents a critical period for language development (Kuhl, 2010). During these formative years, children's brains are highly receptive to language input, with neural pathways being established that will support future linguistic and cognitive development. For bilingual children, this critical period extends to both languages. Intervening early with appropriate bilingual support capitalizes on this window of opportunity, enhancing outcomes across languages rather than prioritizing one at the expense of the other.

Marie Clay's early literacy processing theory provides an essential framework for understanding bilingual early literacy development. She conceptualized literacy learning as children's construction of inner control of systems that enables them to become self-regulating readers and writers. Her observation that literacy emerges through meaningful engagement with text in supportive contexts has profound implications for multilingual learners. She recognized that children construct their learning within the context of their own prior knowledge and experiences (Clay, 1998), which for bilingual children includes their experiences with multiple languages.

Clay's literacy processing theory emphasizes how readers strategically integrate multiple sources of information (Clay, 2001). This orchestration parallels the way multilingual learners navigate across languages, drawing on their full linguistic repertoire to make meaning. Her instructional approach centers on building self-extending systems where learners become increasingly independent by using their strengths as resources for problem solving (Clay, 1991). Effective literacy instruction helps the child to work on

information from many sources and teaches them to use what they know to help them with what they do not yet know (Clay, 1998). For bilingual children, these knowledge sources span both languages, requiring teachers who understand how literacy processing systems develop across languages and who can support the complex cross-linguistic connections that strengthen biliteracy development (Escamilla et al., 2018).

A preventative approach through early bilingual intervention aligns with best practices in education and reflects Clay's emphasis on early intervention. By supporting bilingual development from the start, educators can help prevent the academic difficulties that often emerge when children's home language resources are neglected (August & Shanahan, 2010). Clay (2016) emphasized that once inappropriate reading behaviors become habituated, they are significantly more difficult to correct. This is particularly relevant for multilingual learners who may develop ineffective strategies to compensate when their full linguistic repertoires are not acknowledged. This preventive stance is more efficient and effective than attempting to remediate entrenched learning difficulties that develop when children lack appropriate linguistic scaffolding in their early educational experiences.

As Cummins' (2000) common underlying proficiency model demonstrates, skills and concepts developed in a child's home language transfer to their second language. This principle aligns with Clay's (1991, 2001) understanding that children build integrated literacy processing systems that transfer across tasks and concepts. Early intervention that builds a strong foundation in the home language creates cognitive structures that support subsequent learning in English. For example, when a child learns concepts about print (text carries the meaning, directionality of print, spaces between words), these concepts transfer across languages. Similarly, rich vocabulary development in Spanish provides conceptual knowledge that transfers to English vocabulary learning, even when the specific words differ. Neglecting home language development during early intervention undermines this potential to transfer knowledge from one language to another and misses a crucial opportunity to strengthen the foundation for all future learning.

Early intervention is informed by close work with families of young children. When intervention approaches ignore or minimize the home language, they implicitly devalue what Moll and his colleagues (1992) describe as "funds of knowledge," the rich collection of cultural practices, skills and knowledge that families cultivate over time to navigate their daily lives successfully. Moll's research demonstrates how families' cultural practices and linguistic resources represent valuable assets that can and should be leveraged in educational settings. Bilingual approaches honor these funds of knowledge and position parents as capable partners in their children's educational journeys (González et al., 2005). This alignment between home and school creates continuity in children's experiences and strengthens the home-school partnership that is critical for early intervention success.

The convergence of historical developments, theoretical frameworks, and research evidence points clearly toward the value of bilingual approaches in early intervention. Marie Clay's foundational work on early literacy processing and following different paths to common outcomes provides additional theoretical support for bilingual interventions. The integration of Clay's insights with contemporary bilingual theories creates a strong rationale for practices that honor and build upon students' home languages and their language of instruction. Rather than viewing children's home languages as deficits, bilingual early intervention recognizes them as valuable resources. This asset-based perspective aligns with current understandings of bilingualism as an academic advantage. As programs and policies continue to evolve, bilingual early intervention represents a critical opportunity to support multilingual children in ways that honor their unique developmental pathways and establish a strong foundation for future literacy success.

DESCUBRIENDO LA LECTURA: A SPANISH EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The previously mentioned extensive research supporting Spanish-language instruction for fostering literacy development among Spanish-speaking children provided the foundation for developing Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL), a Spanish language early intervention program designed specifically for Spanish-speaking first graders experiencing reading difficulties. Developed in the early 1990s, DLL represents a reconstruction rather than a translation of Reading Recovery, ensuring that Clay's theoretical framework is honored while adapting to the unique linguistic features of Spanish and the cultural context of multilingual learners in the United States. This approach provides one-on-one literacy intervention for students receiving classroom instruction in Spanish, maintaining alignment between intervention and classroom language.

Torres Elías (2018) explains that Descubriendo la Lectura embodies Clay's core principle that literacy learning occurs through the construction of integrated processing systems. Grounded in constructivist theory, DLL maintains Clay's emphasis on helping children develop self-extending systems by building on their existing strengths and knowledge. Teachers of DLL recognize the fundamental role of oral language for literacy development, leveraging children's Spanish speaking abilities to support their reading and writing growth. Central to DLL's approach is the use of continuous, meaningful texts rather than isolated skills instruction, allowing children to develop strategic processing through authentic reading experiences. The teaching emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing, with each reinforcing and strengthening the other as children construct meaning through text. Throughout all instruction, the ultimate goal remains developing independence, ensuring that children internalize strategic behaviors that will serve them as self-regulating readers and writers long after the intervention concludes.

The development of DLL reflects Clay's understanding that effective literacy instruction must be responsive to children's individual paths to learning (Clay, 1998). Rather than following a predetermined sequence of skills, DLL teachers observe children's literacy behaviors carefully and design instruction that builds on what children can already do while supporting their progress toward more complex processing. This approach aligns with Clay's observation that children construct their learning within the context of their own prior knowledge and experiences.

Clay's emphasis on preventing rather than remediating literacy difficulties is central to DLL's design. By providing early intervention in Spanish for children receiving Spanish instruction, DLL prevents the confusion and academic setbacks that can occur when children receive literacy support in a language different from their classroom instruction.

The strategic nature of DLL instruction reflects Clay's understanding that proficient readers integrate multiple sources of information simultaneously as they employ searching and checking processes. DLL teachers help children orchestrate different information types while acknowledging the cross-linguistic connections that strengthen bilingual children's literacy development. When children demonstrate knowledge from both Spanish and English, teachers honor these translanguaging practices as evidence of their expanding linguistic repertoires rather than viewing them as confusion or interference.

Descubriendo la Lectura represents a concrete application of the theoretical principles discussed throughout this chapter. By implementing Clay's literacy processing theory within a bilingual framework that honors children's home language resources, DLL demonstrates how early intervention can be both theoretically sound and culturally responsive, showing how effective practice emerges when research-based intervention approaches are adapted to meet the specific needs of multilingual learners.

THE INSTRUMENTO DE OBSERVACIÓN: CONSIDERATIONS

Implementing theoretically sound bilingual early intervention programs like Descubriendo la Lectura requires assessment instruments that reflect the same asset-based, culturally responsive principles that guide instruction. As part of the development of DLL, researchers created the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial*, which builds upon Marie Clay's assessment framework. The development began in 1988 in a large urban school district in Tucson, Arizona. Researchers recognized that effective implementation of the assessment tool required more than mere translation. Creating an authentic observational instrument that accurately reflected both the linguistic features and the cultural context of Spanish-speaking children in the United States demanded a careful reconstruction of the English *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 1989, 1993a). After completing this reconstruction, researchers conducted field testing to validate the reliability of the *Instrumento de observación* tasks and to confirm the practical feasibility of systematic observation in Spanish. The complete research findings can be found in Escamilla et al.'s (1996) original chapter 5 from the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* in the appendix of this resource.

The construction of the Spanish survey described in this resource integrates knowledge bases and theoretical perspectives from both bilingual education and Marie Clay. This approach addresses the growing need for effective assessment tools in the United States, specifically, for methods to support Spanish-speaking children experiencing reading difficulties without prematurely transitioning them to English instruction or inappropriately placing them in remedial classes. Continued growth of multilingual learners in schools combined with the persistent overrepresentation of these students in remedial programs (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014) underscores the necessity for interventions like Descubriendo la Lectura for both policymakers and classroom practitioners. Such initiatives are essential if Spanish-speaking students across the nation are to achieve their full academic potential.

The observational tasks in this resource were specifically developed for use with Spanish-speaking students in the United States. This population exhibits considerable linguistic diversity, encompassing various bilingual development patterns. These range from sequential bilinguals, who are monolingual Spanish speakers with no English proficiency, to simultaneous bilinguals who are developing both languages from early childhood but may demonstrate stronger Spanish proficiency, to balanced bilinguals who demonstrate advanced proficiency in both languages but often with different strengths in academic language across domains. Regardless of the language development pattern, students often have a personal preference for one language over another.

The assessment tasks detailed in this resource have been designed with the unique linguistic profiles of multilingual learners in mind. These measures enable educators to document not only a child's Spanish literacy behaviors, but also to capture the complex interplay between Spanish and English that characterize these children's developing literacy. This translanguaging perspective recognizes that for many students, literacy development occurs at the intersection of two language systems that continuously influence each other in their daily experiences both inside and outside of school (García & Wei, 2014). All of the tasks in this resource incorporate specific guidelines for documenting and valuing instances where students draw from their entire linguistic repertoires. The protocols explicitly acknowledge translanguaging practices by providing suggestions on how to record when children move between Spanish and English during assessment tasks. This asset-based approach recognizes children's total linguistic knowledge, validating their conceptual understanding regardless of which language or combination of languages they utilize to demonstrate their literacy knowledge (Escamilla et al., 2014).

Chapter 5

The refinement and updating of the *Instrumento de observación*

While Marie M. Clay's *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (2019) has evolved through four editions, with each iteration incorporating refinements and enhancements, the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* (1996) has undergone its first comprehensive revision with this publication. The update aligns the Spanish assessment tool with the substantial developments reflected in the 2019 fourth edition of Clay's work, representing a crucial step forward in providing Spanish-speaking students and Descubriendo la Lectura teachers an updated assessment tool.

A consistent change across all six tasks of the *Instrumento de observación* is the removal of English translations from the administration directions. This refinement simplifies the layout to help teachers focus on the Spanish prompts when administering the assessment.

An additional change across all tasks is the reformatting of the assessment prompts in blue, bold text. This formatting serves multiple purposes: it mirrors Marie Clay's approach in the fourth edition of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (2019), creates visual distinction between administration directions and prompts, and ensures readability. Bold text is used for emphasis in this resource because italics are reserved mostly for Spanish words, following APA 7th edition guidelines for foreign language formatting. This layout clearly indicates what teachers should say during the administration of each task.

A final enhancement across the tasks is the updating of examples to balance the preservation of effective original content with the addition of new, relevant examples.

The most recent stanines for all tasks are included in the appendix.

CONCEPTOS DEL TEXTO IMPRESO TASK

The *Conceptos del texto impreso* task is designed to allow students to demonstrate their awareness of printed language conventions. It reveals what emergent readers have noticed about print from their experiences and their environments.

Since the original publication of the *Instrumento de observación*, two additional *Conceptos del texto impreso* booklets have been created. Teachers can now choose from *Las piedras* and *Arena* (the original options) as well as *Descalzo* and *Sígueme, Luna*. This expansion mirrors the options available in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (4th ed.) (Clay, 2019).

A substantial change has been made to the administration pages of the *Conceptos del texto impreso* task in response to the challenges newly trained teachers have encountered when using the original format. The redesigned layout follows a more linear structure and uses color-coding to guide teachers through the assessment task.

A “Quick reference for scoring standards” in both English and Spanish has been included to allow teachers access to key terminology in both languages as they summarize what children know and use this information to plan instruction.

TAKING RECORDS OF READING CONTINUOUS TEXTS (REGISTROS PROGRESIVOS) TASK

Registros progresivos allow teachers to systematically observe and capture a student’s oral reading behaviors. Through careful documentation, teachers can then analyze how students process the text, identify the student’s strategic processing patterns, and use this information to plan instruction.

The recording and scoring sections have been updated to provide clearer guidance for teachers.

The original *Registro progresivo* form is used in this resource. Since Descubriendo la Lectura resources undergo continuous updates and refinements, teachers are encouraged to check with their teacher leaders and trainers or refer to myliteracycouncil.org for the most current protocols and authorized variations.

IDENTIFICACIÓN DE LETRAS TASK

The *Identificación de letras* task is designed to find out what a student knows about letters. Children might show they know a letter by telling its name, the sound it makes, or a syllable or word that starts with that letter. Any of these methods shows that the child recognizes the letter in some way.

Prior to this revision, the *Identificación de letras* task included 61 letters, which was 7 more than the Letter Identification task in English. The additional Spanish letters that were included were: “Ch, ch, Ll, ll, Ñ, ñ and rr.” The assessment met the current research and teaching practices at the time.

In 2010, the Real Academia Española officially removed the “Ch, ch” and the “Ll, ll” from the Spanish alphabet, recognizing them as digraphs rather than separate letters. The “rr” was never formally recognized as a distinct letter, always functioning as a digraph. The “Ñ, ñ” continue to be a part of the official Spanish alphabet. In response to these updates, classroom instruction and learning materials throughout Spanish-speaking

education programs in the United States have changed to reflect this new understanding. To maintain alignment with current teaching practices and linguistic standards, the *Identificación de letras* task has been revised. The current version assesses a total of 56 letters, with “Ch, ch, Ll, ll, and rr” having been removed from the task. The “Ñ, ñ” remain as assessed letters. New recording and administration forms have been created to incorporate these changes.

The prompts for the *Identificación de letras* task have been refined to align with the updated language in the fourth edition of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2019).

LECTURA DE PALABRAS TASK

The *Lectura de palabras* task, developed in Arizona in 1989, was designed to sample from Spanish words the child has had an opportunity to learn from classroom reading materials.

The previous version of the *Instrumento de observación* did not include specific administration prompts for this task. To align with the fourth edition of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2019), this revised version now includes prompts to guide assessors. Additionally, the recording and scoring section has been enhanced with detailed guidance on documenting and scoring Spanish-specific reading behaviors.

ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO TASK

The *Escritura de vocabulario* task gives children the opportunity to write all the words they know within a ten-minute time period. This assessment provides teachers with valuable insights into students’ developing writing vocabularies and their emerging understandings about how written language works.

The prompts for the *Escritura de vocabulario* task have been refined to reflect the language in the fourth edition of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2019). Likewise, the suggested list of Spanish words that children might know how to write has also been expanded. The order of the prompts has been changed based on teachers’ feedback from their experiences administering the task. Teachers will first see the prompt for a child who does attempt to write his name, followed by the less frequently used prompt for a child who does not attempt to write his name.

The scoring guidelines have been enhanced with clearer and more detailed explanations as well as additional scoring examples.

OÍR Y ANOTAR SONIDOS EN PALABRAS TASK

The *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras* task reveals students' developing control of sound-to-letter relationships. This assessment helps teachers understand how children analyze the sounds in words and represent them when writing.

To maintain consistency with changes made to the Spanish alphabet, the sentences for the *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras* task have been relabeled as A, B, C, and D, replacing the previous labels of A, B, C and Ch. Slight refinements have been made to the prompts to align with the language in the fourth edition of *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2019).

The scoring guidelines have been enhanced with clearer and more detailed explanations as well as with additional scoring examples.

Chapter 6

Observation task for *Conceptos del texto impreso*

CONCEPTOS DEL TEXTO IMPRESO

Early in literacy learning children must discover something about the arbitrary conventions we have for putting the language we speak into a printed form. How do we print the messages we want others to read? Where does the story begin? This is sometimes described as ‘print awareness.’ But that can mean many things. What is learned in a child’s first contacts with books are some directional rules for moving through print, and some simple ideas or concepts about how print works.

As children begin to engage with printed messages, they learn some things about looking through a book in some orderly kind of way. However, there is still a great deal more to learn about the written code and this is learned over an extended period of time. There is no way to explain the idea of a code to a young child. If we tried to do this, we would be likely to confuse children but a good diet of book-sharing in the preschool years, plus responding to their efforts to find things in print or to write messages to people, will prepare children quite well for what they will be asked to do when they enter school. As a result of highly varied preschool opportunities, different children will know different things on school entry. It is not really a question of how much they know; it is more a matter of what personal experiences they have had with print, what they have noticed and what they have ignored (Clay, 2010b, 2014).

It is easy to capture what children already know by using the *Conceptos del texto impreso* observation task, and teachers will be better prepared to advance any child’s understanding when they know what children are already attending to. *Conceptos del texto impreso* is designed to reveal what children are attending to, rightly or wrongly. With this task we can observe what children have learned about the way we print language. In addition to Spanish, the task has been redeveloped for use in several languages including Greek (Tafa, 2009) and in the Hebrew script (Clay, 2014). It taps into what learners have been noticing about the written language around them in their environments.

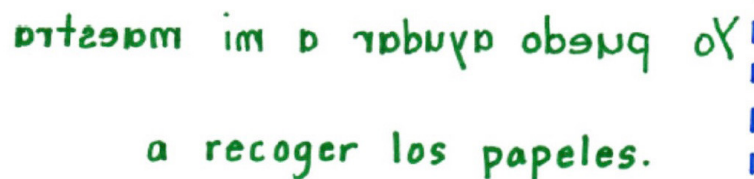
Where do you start to attend to print? In what direction do you move? How do you move through a word? These are features of any written message in any language or script, especially when the message is longer than one word. If we are only thinking of single letters or words, it is not too difficult, but give a beginning reader just a couple of lines of print and he can become confused. Because some children fall easily into appropriate ways of looking at print, parents and teachers can underestimate how extraordinarily complex it is to understand some of the rules of the written code. It is very easy for a child to pick up strange ways of exploring print that we teachers may not notice but

which can become established habits.

Teachers who observe carefully notice that some concepts about print take more than a year to become established. For example, it takes time to learn to respond without error to the two questions, “¿Qué es una letra?” and “¿Qué es una palabra?” Concepts about print are learned gradually as children become readers and writers.

One little girl had surprising behaviors when she moved from right to left across a left page and left to right across a right page. The centerfold of the double-page spread was her starting point. And why not?

Another new entrant to Grade 1 tried to respond to her teacher’s instruction to “*Copie este mensaje y asegúrese de comenzar en el margen.*” The girl did her best to comply, given her current understanding of writing messages. However, because her paper was the wrong way round, her margin was on the right, so she wrote right to left!

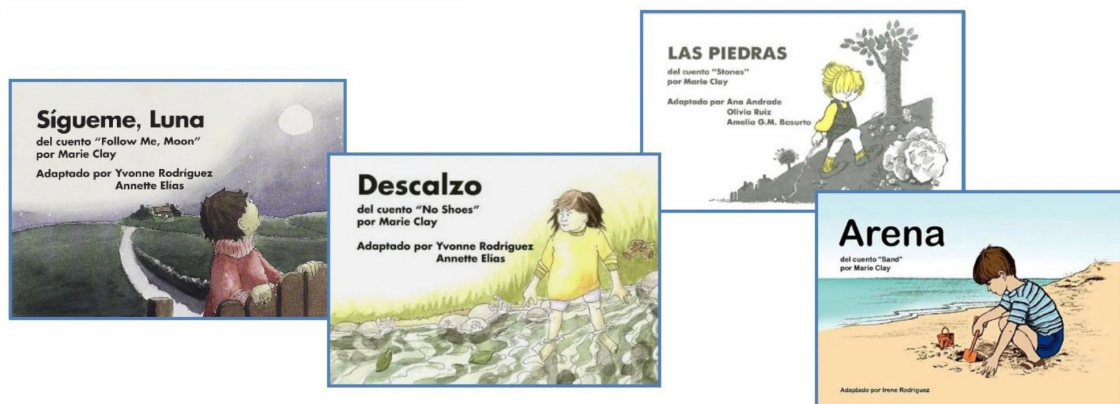


oY obəuq ɔ ɹəbuxə ɔ im ɪ mɪ wəstə
a recoger los papeles.

Research has shown that what children know about letters, sounds and words begins to expand rapidly once they begin literacy activities in school. Concepts must be learned, and the teacher’s twin goals are first to help children become aware of how print works, and then always to take those concepts into account but to do this without having to pay much attention to them. Conventions that must be followed are directional movement across print, the orientation of letters (which is not optional), and attending to the sequence of letters, words and ideas. A successful learner comes very quickly to act within those rules and rarely has to think about them. Theorists, however, have given too little attention to children who find it particularly challenging to learn how to act within these essential features of a written language code.

Revealing what children know

The four special booklets prepared for the *Conceptos del texto impreso* observation task are *Sígueme, Luna*; *Descalzo*; *Arena*; and *Las piedras*. All of the books are conceptual reconstructions of Marie Clay's Concepts About Print books.



They can be used with non-readers or beginning readers, on entry to school or after a time in instruction. The child is asked to help the observer by pointing to certain features of the text while the observer reads the story. Five-year-old children have some fun and a little difficulty with these tasks. They are not expected to get high scores; the teacher is finding out what is known and what is not known about how print works. However, the task has proved to be a sound measuring instrument for most children during the first two years of school.

On entry to school

A teacher who knows each child's starting place in relation to print is better prepared to observe gradual change as it takes place. If teachers lift the speed at which children orient to text and learn to find their way around it, and succeed in lifting *Conceptos del texto impreso* scores by the time they are six years of age, that would not necessarily reduce the number of children needing an early literacy intervention. Orienting to texts is only one of the steps needed for constructing effective processing in reading and writing - there are other important things to learn about letters, words, sounds and meanings, and how we put language things together. Teachers work on all these things too.

How much do children need to know about print?

Eventually children need to follow all the rules, but they do not learn them all at once. This learning will come mostly from the opportunities they have to read and write at school. It is valuable to discover what children already know about books and print because there can be large individual differences in what they can attend to. The differences are not just in how much they know, but also in the fact that one child will understand some aspects of reading and writing which are quite different from the things

another child has learned to pay attention to. Teachers must become interested in and observant of these differences.

Of course, understanding some of these arbitrary rules for setting down language in a written form, these printing conventions, is only one aspect of literacy learning. Other aspects of literacy learning can be observed with different observation tasks, discussed in the following chapters. The learner needs more than one key to unlock the code. The tasks provide teachers with ways to observe several different aspects of literacy learning. When a child understands what to attend to, in what order, and a few things about the shapes and positions of letters and words, this opens other doors to literacy learning.

Observing progress

This observation task should be given in a standard way because then it can reflect changes in reading competency during the first and second year at school. Children do not need to be able to talk about these concepts. As long as they can learn to work within the directional constraints of print without having to pay them much attention, the children have what is needed to underpin subsequent progress. Confusions with these arbitrary conventions of a written language code can persist among problem readers and interfere with other aspects of literacy learning.

The *Conceptos del texto impreso* task has proved to be a sensitive indicator of behaviors that support reading and writing acquisition, but the assessment score cannot be expected to stand alone as an indicator of readiness. The concepts are just things children must come to understand. Becoming involved with literacy activities will help them to grasp some, and eventually all, of these necessary concepts. Sooner is better than later, but it would be absurd to try to build learning activities to teach such concepts before a child is engaged in some kind of reading and writing experiences - these things go hand in hand.

Concepts that children have yet to learn can usually be developed while children are exploring a variety of texts, and teachers can focus on particular needs that have been identified. The problematic thing is that if teachers are not expecting and not watching for a gradual change towards control over all these concepts, then some children will be practicing a variety of misconceptions and confusions. When these go unnoticed, they can become habituated and hard to change.

USING THE CONCEPTOS DEL TEXTO IMPRESO OBSERVATION TASK

Administration

Before starting, become very familiar with the *Conceptos del texto impreso* story that you intend to use, the score sheet and the administration instructions. Giving this assessment in a valid way requires prior practice. Despite the questions which ask for the child's help, the story must be read with sufficient continuity and vitality for the child to be able to gain its meaning and a sense of the flow. Try to avoid adding extra comments.

Develop a standard way of using this observation task, always reading from the administration guide, following the instructions with precision, and making sure that the child understands what he is being asked to do. Position the sheet with the instructions to the side away from the child. After the first item has been given, the book (*Sígueme, Luna; Descalzo; Arena; or Las piedras*) should be placed between you and the child so that you can both see it easily.

Administer the items as directed. The administration instructions for the task are included in this resource. You will need a copy of the *Resultados de los Conceptos del texto impreso* (included in this resource) for every child. To keep the scoring unobtrusive, mark incomplete or incorrect responses with a dot (•). Note down student behavior under *Comentario*.

Read the instructions to the child, as they are written, for each item. Use the *exact* wording given in each demonstration. Move deliberately and demonstrate clearly. In Spanish, due to regional varieties and dialects, certain words may require clarification for children. For instance, in Item 12, the word *cerca* (fence) might need to be explained if a child appears confused or asks about it, as there are multiple ways to say 'fence' in Spanish (e.g., *cerco, verja*). While it's essential to maintain a standardized task, it's also important to be flexible in communicating the task to the child. If adjustments in wording are necessary to accommodate regional differences, make a note of the effective prompt.

Make sure the child is attending to the print before asking item 10. On items 10, 12, 13, and 14, your position and movements must ensure that the child is attending to the print. If the child does not respond appropriately to item 10, administer item 11, then you might make a decision to omit items 12, 13 and 14 (which are likely to be difficult). If you do omit these items, read the text on pages 12, 13 and 14 aloud to the child and score items 12, 13 and 14 as incorrect. Continue to administer items 15 to 25 to each child.

Recording and scoring

Mark the child's responses on the score sheet (included in this resource). You can simply total the number of items passed and make a note of what the child knows and what has yet to be learned. Use the quick reference for scoring standards (included in this resource) to guide your decisions as to whether a child's response meets the required criteria.

If a child responds in English, mark their English responses with a checkmark (✓) and the letter "E." English responses are considered correct if they are used in place of an equivalent Spanish word. For example, if a child says "comma" instead of "coma," it is a correct response and should be recorded as described above.

Achievement stanines

To compare the child's performance with that of other children, use the stanines provided in this resource. Look up the total raw score obtained by the child and read his scaled score, a number between 1 and 9. This scaled score is called a stanine and it provides a guide to how well the child compares with a sample of children of the same grade. If the score on the table is allocated across more than one stanine group, choose the lowest value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

You will find a general discussion of achievement stanines in this resource, why they are used, when they are helpful and what their limitations are.

Interpreting *Conceptos del texto impreso* scores

A child's knowledge of *Conceptos del texto impreso* will change over the first years of school, and all children will move towards perfect performance. This task is not a prediction device; it yields information for instruction. Confusion is reduced and the runway is cleared for take-off! As an assessment measure, the main purpose of the task is to provide teachers with an initial score so that changes in each child's performance can be recorded 6, 12 or 18 months later. To be a successful reader a child must come to control all the concepts assessed by this task. Change occurs from having a little knowledge, towards having control of all these concepts. That happens for most children within about two years of beginning literacy learning.

The concepts about print measured in this observation task are a limited set of information that can be learned in the first years of school. The task's greatest value is the guidance that it gives to teachers. Items uncover concepts yet to be learned or confusions to be untangled. Young children get low scores early in their schooling, and their scores should increase as their reading and writing improves. Teachers should see a control over these concepts gradually emerging. Reassessing at spaced intervals will show that change is occurring in individual children.

Teachers should examine the child's performance carefully and then gradually teach the unknown concepts. The items are not in a difficulty sequence because the reading of the story did not allow for this. They can be grouped in ways that help analyze behavior and assist in thinking about what children can do.

- Book handling (items 1, 2, 8, 9, 11)
- Directional behavior (items 3, 4, 5, 7, 10)
- Visual scanning, analysis and sequencing behaviors (items 12, 13, 14, 21)
- Specific concepts about printed language (items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25)
- Hierarchical concepts: letters, letters within words, words within sentences (items 6, 22, 23, 24)

You may want to move some items from one group to another or consider particular items in more than one section.

Notice which items children find difficult at first and tend to learn later. What is easy or difficult will be highly dependent on the teaching program, its activities and emphases, and the expectations held in any particular school.

Most of the *Conceptos del texto impreso* items tell us something about what the children are attending to on the printed page. Items 12 to 14 focus attention on the importance of attending to print items in the left-to-right sequence. There is a very steep gradient of difficulty on these tasks.

- First the words are placed in the wrong order.
- Then the letters at the beginning or end of words are re-ordered.
- Finally, the letters in the middle of words are rearranged.

Children usually notice the changed word order (item 12) before a change in first and last letters (item 13) or a change in the letters buried within the word (item 14), and many children take a long time to sort out the difference between what people call a word and what people call a letter!

Administration instructions for *Sígueme, Luna; Descalzo; Arena; and Las piedras*

PAGE	ITEM	ACTION	SCRIPT	SCORE
(before)	--	SAY	Te voy a leer este cuento, pero quiero que me ayudes.	
COVER	1	DO	Pass the book to the child, holding it vertically by outside edge, spine towards the child.	front of book
		SAY	Enséñame la parte de enfrente del libro.	
		READ	Read the title of the book.	
2-3	2	SAY	Voy a leer el cuento. Ayúdame. Enséñame dónde empezar a leer. ¿Dónde empiezo?	print, not picture
		READ	Read the text on page 2.	
4-5	3	SAY	Enséñame dónde empezar.	top left
	4	SAY	¿Por dónde sigo?	left to right
	5	SAY	¿Y luego a dónde me voy?	return sweep
	6	SAY	Apunta con el dedo mientras leo.	1:1 match
		READ	Read the text on page 4 slowly but fluently.	
6	7	READ	Read the text on page 6. The child must NOT continue word-by-word pointing.	BOTH first & last (text, line, word, or letter)
		SAY	Enséñame la primera parte del cuento. Enséñame la última parte.	
7	8	SAY	(slowly and deliberately) Enséñame la parte de abajo del dibujo. (Do NOT mention upside-down.)	inverted picture
8-9	9	SAY	¿Dónde empiezo? ¿Por dónde sigo? ¿Y luego a dónde me voy después?	directional response to inverted print
		READ	Read the text on page 8 now.	
10-11	10	SAY	¿Qué tiene de mal esta parte?	line sequence
		READ	Immediately read the bottom line first, then the top line. Do NOT point.	

12-13	11	SAY	¿Dónde empiezo a leer?	left page first
	12	SAY	¿Qué tiene de mal esta página?	word sequence
		POINT	Point to page number 12, NOT the text.	
		READ	Read the text on page 12 slowly as if it were correctly printed.	
	13	SAY	¿Qué tiene de mal esta página?	letter order
		POINT	Point to page number 13, NOT the text.	
		READ	Read the text on page 13 slowly as if it were correctly printed.	
14-15	14	SAY	¿Qué tiene de mal la escritura de esta página?	letter order
		READ	Read the text on page 14 slowly as if it were correctly printed.	
	15	SAY	¿Para qué son estos?	question marks
		POINT	Point to or trace <i>los signos de interrogación</i> with a pencil.	
16-17	16	READ	Read the text on page 16.	punto final
		SAY	¿Para qué es esto?	
		POINT	Point to or trace <i>el punto</i> with a pencil.	
	17	SAY	¿Para qué es esto?	coma
		POINT	Point to or trace <i>la coma</i> with a pencil.	
	18	SAY	¿Para qué es esto?	raya
		POINT	Point to or trace <i>la raya</i> with a pencil.	
	19	SAY	¿Para qué es esto?	acento
		POINT	Point to or trace <i>el acento</i> with a pencil.	
	20	SAY	Busca una letra minúscula (chiquita) como ésta.	matching both upper- to lower-case pairs
		POINT	<i>Las piedras/Arena: Point to an uppercase A and demonstrate by pointing to a lowercase a if the child does not succeed. Sígueme, Luna: I, Descalzo: U (p. 14).</i>	
		SAY	Busca una letra minúscula (chiquita) como ésta.	
			<i>Las piedras: P, E Sígueme, Luna: P, L Arena: E, M Descalzo: M, D</i>	

18-19	21	READ	Read the text on page 18.	both reversible words
		SAY	Enséñame la palabra <i>la</i>. } <i>Sígueme, Luna;</i> Enséñame la palabra <i>ya</i>. } <i>Descalzo, Las piedras</i> Enséñame la palabra <i>ya</i>. } <i>Arena</i> Enséñame la palabra <i>las</i>. }	
		DO	To start, lay the cards on the page but leave all print exposed. Open the cards out between each question asked.	
20	22	SAY	Este cuento dice: (READ page 20). Mueve las tarjetas encima del cuento así, hasta que se vea (deliberately with stress) SOLAMENTE UNA LETRA.	both 1 & 2 letters
		DO	Demonstrate the movement of the cards but do not do the exercise. Speak deliberately. Stress the item.	
		SAY	Ahora, enséñame DOS LETRAS.	
	23	SAY	Enséñame UNA PALABRA. Ahora, enséñame DOS PALABRAS.	both 1 & 2 words
	24	SAY	Enséñame la PRIMERA LETRA de una palabra. Enséñame la ÚLTIMA LETRA de una palabra.	both 1st & last letters
	25	SAY	Enséñame una letra MAYÚSCULA.	capital letter

See quick references for scoring standards on pages 66 and 67

- ☐ Arena
☐ Las piedras
☐ Sígueme, Luna
☐ Descalzo

RESULTADOS DE LOS CONCEPTOS DEL TEXTO IMPRESO

Fecha: _____

Nombre: _____ Edad: _____

RESULTADO: /25

Observador: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____

GRUPO ESTANINA:

Revisado 1/2025

PÁGINA	RESULTADO	PREGUNTA	COMENTARIO
La cubierta		1. Parte de adelante	
2/3		2. El texto impreso lleva el mensaje (no la ilustración)	
4/5 4/5 4/5 4/5		3. Dónde empezar 4. Dónde seguir 5. Regresar a la izquierda 6. Aparear palabra por palabra	
6		7. Concepto de principio y fin	
7		8. La parte de abajo del dibujo	
8/9		9. Empezar en el renglón de abajo con “La” (<i>Las piedras</i>), “Las” (<i>Arena y Descalzo</i>), “Corrí” (<i>Sígueme, Luna</i>)	
10/11		10. Cambio del orden de los renglones	
12/13 12/13 12/13		11. Página izquierda antes que la derecha 12. Un cambio en el orden de las palabras 13. Un cambio en el orden de las letras	
14/15 14/15		14. Un cambio en el orden de las letras 15. Significado de ¿?	
16/17 16/17 16/17 16/17 16/17		16. Significado del punto 17. Significado de la coma 18. Significado de la raya (<i>Las piedras; Descalzo; Sígueme, Luna</i>) Significado de las comillas (<i>Arena</i>) 19. Significado de la tilde (acento ortográfico) 20. Encuentra Pp, Ee (<i>Las piedras</i>), Ee, Mm (<i>Arena</i>), Pp, Ll (<i>Sígueme, Luna</i>), Mm, Dd (<i>Descalzo</i>)	
18/19		21. Palabras reversibles: “la”, “ya” (<i>Las piedras; Descalzo; Sígueme, Luna</i>); “ya”, “las” (<i>Arena</i>)	
20 20 20 20		22. Una letra; dos letras 23. Una palabra; dos palabras 24. Primera y última letra de una palabra 25. Letra mayúscula	

Quick reference for scoring standards: English

Item	Concept Assessed	Pass Standard
1	Orientation of book	Front of book.
2	Print, not picture, carries meaning	Print (not picture).
3	Directional rules	Points top left at 'Tomé'...(Arenas); 'Vi un'...(Las piedras); 'Cuando'...(Descalzo); ¡Hola, Luna!...(Sígueme, Luna).
4	Moves left to right	Moves finger left to right on any line.
5	Return sweep	Moves finger from the right-hand end of a higher line to the left-hand end of the next lower line, or moves down the page. (Score items 3-5 correct if all movements are demonstrated in one response.)
6	Word-by-word pointing	Word-by-word matching.
7	Concept of first and last	Both concepts must be correct but may be demonstrated on the whole text or on a line, word or letter.
8	Inversion of picture	Verbal explanation, or pointing to top of page, or turning the book around and pointing appropriately.
9	Response to inverted print	Score for beginning with 'Las' (Arenas, Descalzo) or 'La' (Las piedras) or 'Corri' (Sígueme, Luna) and moving right to left across the lower line and then the upper line, OR turning the book around and moving left to right in the conventional movement pattern.
10	Line sequence	Any explanation which implies that line order is altered.
11	Left page before right	Says or shows that a left page precedes a right page.
12	Word sequence	Notifies at least one change of word order.
13	Letter order (first/last)	Notifies at least one change in letter order.
14	Letter order (within word)	Notifies at least one change in letter order.
15	Question mark	Says 'signo de interrogación' or 'una pregunta' or 'pregunta algo.'
16	Period	Says 'parar' or 'punto' or 'punto final' or 'cuando no hay más' or 'es el fin.'
17	Comma	Says 'paras un poquito' or 'para descansar' or 'una coma' or 'una pausa.'
18	Talking marks	Says 'cuando alguien está hablando' or 'para hablar' or 'es un guion' or 'raya.'
19	Accent	Says 'acento' or 'la palabra es diferente/no es igual' or gives an example (mamá, papá, a name-López).
20	Upper- and lowercase letters	Locates two uppercase and lowercase pairs.
21	Words that contain the same letters in a different order	Points correctly to both 'la' and 'ya' (Las piedras; Descalzo; Sígueme, Luna) or 'las' and 'ya' (Arenas).
22	Letter concept	Locates one letter and two letters on request.
23	Word concept	Locates one word and two words on request.
24	First/last letter concepts	Locates both a first and a last letter.
25	Capital letter concept	Locates a capital letter.

Quick reference for scoring standards: Spanish		
Item	Concept Assessed	Pass Standard
1	Orientación del libro	La parte de enfrente del libro.
2	Texto impreso lleva el sentido	Texto impreso (no la ilustración).
3	Reglas direccionales	Apunta hacia arriba, a la izquierda: ‘Tomé’...(Arenas); ‘Vi un’...(Las piedras); ‘Cuando’...(Descalzo); ¡Hola, Luna!...(Sígueme, Luna).
4	Mueve desde la I hacia la D	Mueve el dedo de izquierda a derecha en cualquier línea.
5	El regreso	Mueve el dedo de la punta del lado derecho de una línea más arriba a la otra punta del lado izquierdo de la siguiente línea abajo, o lo mueve hacia abajo de la página. (Marque los ítems 3-5 como correctos si todos los movimientos se demuestran en una sola respuesta.)
6	Emparejar palabra por palabra	Emparejar las palabras con el dedo.
7	Concepto de comienzo y fin	Ambos conceptos deben estar correctos, pero se puede mostrar en todo el texto completo o en sola una línea, palabra, o letra.
8	Inversión del dibujo	Explanación oral, o apunta a la parte superior de la página, o voltea el libro y señala apropiadamente.
9	Respuesta al texto impreso invertido	Empieza con la palabra ‘Las’ (Arenas, Descalzo) o ‘La’ (Las piedras) o ‘Corrí’ (Sígueme, Luna) y se mueve de la derecha a izquierda a través de la línea más abajo y después en la línea de arriba, o volteando el libro y moviendo de la izquierda a la derecha en una manera convencional de movimiento.
10	Orden de las líneas	Cualquier explicación que implique que el orden de la línea ha sido cambiado.
11	Página I antes de la D	Dice o muestra que la página del lado izquierdo precede la página del lado derecho.
12	Orden de las palabras	Se fija, por lo menos, en un cambio en el orden de las palabras.
13	Orden de las letras (cambio en primera/última letra)	Se fija, por lo menos, en un cambio en el orden de las letras.
14	Orden de las letras (cambio en letras adentro de pal.)	Se fija, por lo menos, en un cambio en el orden de las letras.
15	Signos de interrogación	Dice ‘signo de interrogación’ o ‘una pregunta’ o ‘pregunta algo.’
16	Punto final	Dice ‘parar’ o ‘punto’ o ‘punto final’ o ‘cuando no hay más’ o ‘es el fin.’
17	Coma	Dice ‘paras un poquito’ o ‘para descansar’ o ‘una coma’ o ‘una pausa.’
18	Raya	Dice ‘cuando alguien está hablando’ o ‘para hablar’ o ‘es un guion’ o ‘raya.’
19	Acento	Dice ‘acento’ o ‘la palabra es diferente/no es igual’ o da un ejemplo (mamá, López).
20	Letras may/min	Señala dos pares de mayúsculas y minúsculas.
21	Palabras reversibles	Apunta correctamente a las dos palabras ‘la’ y ‘ya’ (Las piedras; Descalzo; Sígueme, Luna) o ‘las’ y ‘ya’ (Arenas).
22	Concepto de letras	Identifica una y dos letras a petición.
23	Concepto de palabras	Identifica una y dos palabras a petición.
24	Primera/última letra	Identifica una primera letra y una última letra.
25	Letra mayúscula	Identifica una letra mayúscula.

Chapter 7

Taking records of reading continuous texts

REGISTROS PROGRESIVOS

Records of children reading continuous text provide different kinds of information from tests of letters, sounds and words in isolation. Running Records were developed for a longitudinal research study of early literacy learning and were first published in *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties: A Diagnostic Survey* (Clay, 1972a). *Registros progresivos* are the Spanish adaptation of Running Records. The descriptions in this chapter match the most recent publication of *Running Records for Classroom Teachers* (Clay, 2017b).

This chapter describes some of the key ideas about using *Registros progresivos* as an assessment of text reading. It introduces how to take and score a reliable record and how that record can be interpreted. Standard ways of recording are recommended to take care of almost all of the unusual behaviors teachers might encounter. The conventions described have been widely used with children who are reading Spanish. The recording is easy for teachers to use and has proved to be a valid form of assessment. To achieve objective records the teacher has to be a recorder of behavior and not a stimulus to behavior. All comments, teaching points, helpful replies, and leading questions have to be dispensed with entirely. The guiding maxim is “Record now – teach later.”

Teachers may have to learn some new terms and concepts in order to interpret their *Registros progresivos*. The procedures are simple, yet what those teachers record can challenge them to think with greater clarity about the progress of early readers. A series of *Registros progresivos* from children reading texts can provide evidence of change in reading behaviors. Teachers can take these records, observe the behaviors and support the idiosyncratic processing of a particular child in ways which advance the effectiveness of the reading.

Registros progresivos are not limited to a particular theory of literacy learning. However, in any interpretation of the record, the teacher’s theory of literacy learning begins to become involved. (This is discussed later in this chapter). More extended discussion of literacy learning theories associated with using and interpreting *Registros progresivos* can be found in *Becoming Literate: The Construction of Inner Control* (Clay, 2015a), *By Different Paths to Common Outcomes* (Clay, 2014) and *Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals* (Clay, 2016).

Uses for *Registros progresivos*

Records are taken to guide teaching

Registros progresivos capture what young readers say and do while reading continuous text, usually short stories or books. Having taken the record teachers can review what happened immediately, leading to teaching decisions on the spot, or at a later time as they plan for next lessons. They can judge what the reader already knows, what he attended to, and what he overlooked. They can assess how well each reader is pulling together what he knows about letters, sounds and words in order to get to the messages. This kind of information allows teachers to prompt, support and challenge individual learners. Such records allow teachers to describe how children are working on a text.

Records are taken to assess text difficulty

Registros progresivos can be used to check on whether students are working on material of appropriate difficulty, neither too difficult nor too easy, but offering a suitable level of challenge to the learner.

Records are taken to capture progress

Registros progresivos taken at selected intervals, from the time a child tries to retell a story from the pictures in a book until he has become a silent reader, enable us to plot his path of progress in literacy learning. As teachers try to interpret each *Registro progresivo*, they take into account the difficulty level of the text and make sound judgements about the reader's progress up through a gradient of difficulty in the reading books. A desirable path of progress shows that learners are successfully meeting the challenges of reading increasingly difficult texts.

The examples in this resource are selected to demonstrate how *Registros progresivos* can be taken on both simple and more advanced texts. There is a blank *Registro progresivo* form included in this resource.

Compare two *Registros progresivos* on the same text

The following examples demonstrate what a teacher could learn from *Registros progresivos*. Rebecca and Isaac read the same text, with the same level of accuracy but the records show that they need different emphases in their instruction.

Rebecca's record

Exactitud: 86%

Recuento

Análisis de errores
y autocorrecciones

Pág	Título				E	AC	Información Utilizada	
	El tigre comilón						E SEV	AC SEV
2	✓	✓	✓	✓				
3	✓	✓	✓	<u>tigre</u> tarta	I		S E V	
4	✓	✓	✓	✓				
5	✓	✓	✓	<u>bulces</u> dulces	I		S E V	
6	✓	✓	✓	✓				
7	✓	✓	✓	✓				
8	✓	<u>de</u> dolor	✓	<u>papá</u> panza	I I		S E V S E V	

Rebecca used some visual information from the print and seemed to be paying some attention to sentence structure because a few of her *errores* belonged to a class of words that could occur in the sentence up to the point of *error*. She did not react to the lack of meaning in what she said.

The Text

El tigre comilón

El tigre come pastel.
El tigre come tarta.
El tigre come helado.
El tigre come dulces.
El tigre come galletas.
El tigre come papitas.
¡Qué dolor de panza!

Issac's record

Exactitud: 86%

Recuento

Análisis de errores
y autocorrecciones

Pág	Título				E	AC	Información Utilizada	
	El tigre comilón						E SEV	AC SEV
2	✓	✓	✓	✓				
3	✓	✓	✓	<u>pastel</u> tarta	I		(S)(E) V	
4	✓	✓	✓	<u>nieve</u> helado	I		(S)(E) V	
5	✓	✓	✓	✓				
6	✓	✓	✓	<u>cookies</u> galletas	I		(S)(E) V	
7	✓	✓	✓	✓				
8	✓	✓	✓	<u>estómago</u> panza	I		(S)(E) V	

Isaac used language information and all his *errores* reflected the use of meaning and sentence structure. He did not seem to be aware of the mismatch between what he said and the visual information in the text.

These examples show that *Registros progresivos* can capture how beginning readers are putting together what they know in order to read text. They reveal how these two children were working in different ways on the same book.

LEARNING TO TAKE *REGISTROS PROGRESIVOS*

In every sense this activity of taking *Registros progresivos* should be as relaxed as sharing a book with a child. Invite the child to read to you and tell him that you will be writing down some things. This gives him a little warning that for the next few minutes you are not going to teach. Provide only the name of the book. Teachers who have practiced with a wide variety of children and are at ease in taking *Registros progresivos* will get the most informative records and will make the fairest interpretations.

About three workshop training sessions with a professional who is very familiar with *Registros progresivos* are recommended for teachers before they begin to use this as an assessment technique. It takes more than self-teaching from an instructional guide to achieve a high standard of observing, recording and interpreting. Children do unusual things, so it is helpful for teachers to have regular opportunities to discuss their records with colleagues. From time-to-time school teams should schedule monitoring sessions to review whether the recording and interpretation of *Registros progresivos* is being conducted with consistency.

What does skilled record-taking look like?

A teacher should, ideally, be able to sit down beside a child with a blank sheet of paper and take a *Registro progresivo* when the moment is right. Teachers should practice until it is as easy as that. Any text, at any time, as and when appropriate, should be the goal. Under these conditions this technique will be flexible enough to suit any classroom conditions. It will also be more likely that the teacher's record can be relied upon to be an accurate account. (See later in this chapter for a short example of a *Registro progresivo*.)

Teachers should prepare themselves to get the record down while the child is reading. At first, the easy-to-notice things are recorded. Over time it becomes easy to record more. When they can record the essentials, teachers find that they can also note what the child said about the task, or how he moved across print, or which hand he used if he pointed, and other interesting things like turning back several pages and correcting an earlier *error*. With practice, teachers get more information from their observations and records.

At first, the task seems to require the recorder's full attention without interruption but before long the teacher learns to take *Registros progresivos* with relative ease. Teachers should learn to take *Registros progresivos* in ways that will allow them to use this technique with standard administration, recording and interpretation.

Two things to avoid

Pre-printed recording sheets. There is not enough room on a pre-printed page of text for the teacher to record all the unusual things that can occur. Many teachers are surprised to find that a printed text often will not allow all of the child's behaviors to be recorded. This is because a *Registro progresivo* is not just about correct or incorrect words. It is about a lot more than that. Beginning readers do not keep closely to the text; they sometimes leave out large sections and insert things that are not there; they change direction, go back over what they have read, and confuse themselves.

A *Registro progresivo* needs to capture all the behavior that helps us to interpret what the child was probably doing. Everything the child said and did tells us something when the reading is correct, what his hands and eyes were doing, the comments he made, when he repeated a line of text, and so on. After a *Registro progresivo* a teacher should be able to "hear" the reading again when reviewing the record. This is the aim.

Limiting observations to a few select texts, pre-printed on a scoring sheet, will provide less useful information. Young readers do very interesting things as they attempt to get an acceptable message from the pages of a book, and the object of *Registros progresivos* is to get valid records of how children are arriving at their decisions. Authors and publishers try to make it easy for teachers by providing preprinted text but children's problem-solving on texts is too diverse to conform to a published layout. A printed text encourages teachers to attend only to correct and incorrect responses, and *to ignore how the child is arriving at these decisions*.

Voice recording. Avoid the use of a voice recorder. Having to record the assessment is an aid to get rid of as soon as possible, so why not start without it? Voice recording may seem easier at first, but it limits the analysis because only sounds and language are recorded. It provides no information about how the child moved, seemed puzzled, peered at the print or looked at the ceiling. Observations like those are helpful for understanding what young learners are trying to do.

Select children who will make practicing easier

Practice on a range of readers who are about one year into school, as many as you can. Avoid practicing on higher or lower progress readers until you become skillful. Good readers go too fast, and struggling readers produce complex records. For each child make records of two or three little books, or text pieces, with about 100-200 words in each, and have the child read each whole story or text. At the early reading level when the child is reading the simplest books, the numbers of words may fall below 100, but if three texts are read this will be satisfactory even though the extracts themselves are short. Once a teacher knows how to take *Registros progresivos* it should take about 10 minutes to get three samples. Sharing your early records with a colleague who uses *Registros*

progresivos a lot will produce useful discussions.

Select texts for practicing

Any texts can be used for *Registros progresivos* – books, stories, information texts, or children’s published writing – but a good place to start is with a familiar text that the child has read once or twice before. This seen text will provide evidence of how the reader is bringing different processes and knowledge together. It is a good idea to begin each observation with a text that is familiar to the child. A book that is easy for him will also be easy for teachers to record as they rehearse their recording techniques.

The prime purpose of a Registro progresivo is to understand more about how children are using what they know to get to the messages of the text, or in other words what reading processes they are using.

The teacher may want to know how the child performs on a challenging text. Sometimes she discovers that the child can work at a higher level than she anticipated. A challenging text could show whether the reader recognizes the need for problem-solving and what kinds of problem-solving he tries. However, if the challenges are too great the record will not show how the processing comes together, only how and when it falls apart.

Older proficient readers become fast readers, too fast for the teacher to make checks for every word. Then the observer can give up recording the correct responding, and, keeping strictly to the layout and lines of the text, record everything the reader does to *automonitor*, solve words and *autocorregir*. This is a compromise made only for very fast readers. The record needs to be analyzed immediately as it is hard to recapture the reading from such a limited record.

Finding an *instructivo* text level

An *instructivo* text level is one that is appropriate to use for instruction with a particular child. The text will be read fairly accurately, with not more than one *error* in ten words, but the record will contain some *errores* that provide evidence of processing the information in print. Teachers can then observe how children work at monitoring their own reading. Listening to a young reader we can hear and record how the child is attending to print but as readers become proficient more of the processing is hidden from view, worked out in the child’s head, before a response is made.

Three levels of text difficulty

Research shows that children's learning is helped when we give them material at their personal instructional level. Recording their performance at three levels of text difficulty

- a *texto fácil* (95 to 100 percent accuracy)
- a *texto instructivo* (90 to 94 percent accuracy), and
- a *texto difícil* (80 to 89 percent accuracy)

is the most reliable way to establish what level of text should be used for instruction.

When a gradient of difficulty in text level is being used, the highest-level text the child can read with 90 percent accuracy or above indicates the instructional level. This means that to obtain an instructional level it is necessary to record the child reading a text below 90 percent accuracy (that is, a text that is hard for him).

The terms *fácil*, *instructivo* and *difícil* used in relation to *Registros progresivos* do not refer to the characteristics of the text itself. They describe how a particular child read the text. The terms do not say anything about how another child will read that text. Whether it is *fácil* or *instructivo* or *difícil* is determined entirely by how well this child was able to work on it.

When publishers suggest some order of difficulty in their books they are usually estimating how "children in general" might find these books. Look for evidence of whether the publishers trialed their books on a sample of children and whether those children were anything like the children you teach.

For important education decisions, it is not enough for teachers to assess children only on their current reading books. A text at each of the *fácil*, *instructivo* or *difícil* levels will provide the necessary evidence for a concise summary of where that child is in his learning. (Record the text level on each *Registro progresivo* sheet.)

This more careful approach should be used for important educational decisions like

- moving children to groups for instruction
- observing children with particular difficulties
- selecting children for special and supplementary assistance
- making decisions about promotion, or
- carrying out a school survey of achievement.

For research studies, three levels of difficulty must be obtained to ensure that the assessments are reliable.

HOW TO RECORD WHAT YOU SEE AND HEAR

The following record of a book read well provides an illustration of many but not all of the recording techniques. The record must mimic the layout of lines in the text the child is reading.

—Las abejas hacen la miel	✓ ✓ <u>hace</u> R AC ✓ ✓ hacen
—dijo Osito Marcos—,	✓ ✓ ✓
y a mí me gusta la miel.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Osito Marcos fue al bosque	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
a buscar abejas.	✓ ✓ <u>miel</u> AC abejas
—Ahí están las abejas —dijo—.	✓ <u>está</u> R AC ✓ ✓ ✓ están
¿Adónde van?	✓ ✓

Some observers find that entering the periods helps them keep track of the recording and scoring.

Osito Marcos fue al bosque	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
a buscar abejas.	✓ ✓ ✓.
—Ahí están las abejas —dijo—.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓.

However, there are problems when teachers try to record pausing and phrasing because teachers' practices then tend to be unreliable.

Why use standard procedures?

Teachers want to be able to compare *Registros progresivos* one with another. Either they want to know how Margarita's record today compares with her earlier records, or they need to make some teaching decisions about several children and to compare one reader with another. The aim is to take a full record, capturing behavior and scoring it reliably, so comparisons can be made. To make such comparisons, teachers need to have a common standard for taking records, for describing what they observe, for calculating the scores and interpreting the record.

To support the interpretation of any record, teachers should also try to write down the comments a child makes as he reads the book; working out loud, talking to himself, being surprised, giving some rationale for what he did, and any personal reactions.

Conventions for recording

1. Mark every word read correctly with a check.

A record of the first five pages of *Los leones* that had 100 percent accuracy would look like this. (The lines indicate page breaks.)

Yo soy un león grande.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Yo uso mi boca grande para rugir.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Yo uso mis patas grandes para caminar.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Yo uso mis ojos grandes para ver.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Yo tengo una melena grande.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

2. Record a wrong response with the text under it.

<i>Child:</i>	<u>voy</u>	
<i>Text:</i>	veo	[One error]

3. If a child tries several times to read a word, record all his trials.

<i>Child:</i>	<u>voy</u>		<u>v-</u>		<u>vamos</u>	
<i>Text:</i>	veo					[One error]
<i>Child:</i>	<u>v-</u>		<u>vo-</u>		<u>✓</u>	
<i>Text:</i>	veo					[No error]

Note that in the second example the child was judged to be solving the word and not correcting an *error*.

4. Syllabication in Spanish requires careful observation and documentation.

A. If a child syllabicates a word, mark with a dash between syllables.

Child: <u>tra-je-ron</u>	
Text: trajeron	[See Conventions for scoring #13]
Child: <u>gran-des</u>	
Text: grandes	

B. If the child syllabicates part or all of the word, then reads it correctly, mark the syllabication with dashes, followed by a check.

Child: <u>mi-ra</u> ✓	<u>som-bre-ro</u> ✓	
Text: mira	sombrero	[No error]
Child: <u>a-bue-lito</u> ✓		
Text: abuelito		[No error]

C. If the child begins by syllabication, then reads the entire word, mark the syllabication with dashes followed by a check for correct word reading.

Child: <u>re-co-</u> ✓	<u>co-ra-</u> ✓	
Text: recogían	corazón	[No error]

D. If the child syllabicates a word, rereads, and reads the syllabicated word correctly, mark the syllabication with dashes followed by a check for correct word reading.

Child: ✓	✓	✓	<u>ca-be-za</u> R ✓	
Text:			cabeza	[No error]

5. If a child succeeds in correcting a previous *error* this is recorded as “*autocorrección*” (written AC).

Child:	<u>Mirame</u>	<u>miren</u>	AC	
Text:	mira			[No error]

6. If no response is given to a word or if it is omitted (*omisión*) it is recorded with a dash. *Inserción* of a word is recorded over a dash.

<i>Omisión</i> /No response	<i>Inserción</i>	
Child: <u>—</u>	Child: <u>casa</u>	
Text: casa	Text: —	[In each case one error]

For contractions see Conventions for scoring: 11C.

7. If the child balks, unable to proceed a) because he is aware he has made an *error* and cannot correct it, or b) because he cannot attempt the next word, he is told the word (written as D for *Dado*). This preserves the storyline and starts the reader off again. (Wait no more than about three seconds).

Child:	<u>voy</u>	<u>—</u>		
Text:	veo		D	[One error]
Child:	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>		
Text:	veo		D	[One error]

8. A verbal appeal for help (A for *Ayuda*) from the child is turned back to the child for further effort. Say, “*Trátalo tú*” (recorded as TT). The response from the teacher is *not* a teaching interaction; it involves no prompting but is merely a shift of the initiative. If the child does not respond he is told the word (D). (Wait no more than three seconds).

Child:	<u>—</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>✓</u>	✓	✓
Text:	veo		TT			
						[No error]

9. Sometimes the child gets into a state of confusion and it is necessary to extricate him. The most detached method of doing this is to say “*Trátalo otra vez*,” marking TOV on the record. This would not involve any teaching, but the teacher needs to indicate where

the child should begin again. Put square brackets around the first set of muddled behavior, enter the TOV, remember to count that as one *error* only (see Conventions for scoring #10) and then begin a fresh record of the problem text. An example of this recording is below.

<u>Los</u>	✓	<u>para</u>	<u>que</u>		
Luego		pillos	quieren	[TOV]	
<u>con</u>	✓				
comer				[One error]	
✓	✓	✓	<u>que</u>	R	AC
			quieren		
✓	✓				

10. *Repetición* (R) is not counted as *error* behavior. Sometimes it is used to confirm a previous attempt. Often it results in *autocorrección*. It is useful to record this behavior as it often indicates how much sorting out the child is doing. R, standing for *repetición*, is used to indicate repetition of a word, with R₂ or R₃ indicating the number of repetitions. If the child goes back over a group of words or returns to the beginning of the line or sentence in his repetition, the point to which he returns is shown by an arrow.

Child:	✓	✓	✓	<u>cara</u>	R	AC	
Text:				cabeza			[No error]

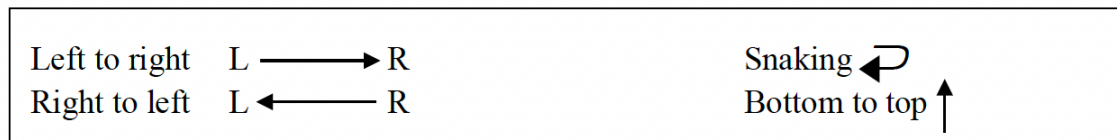
11. Sometimes the child rereads the text (*repetición*) and corrects some but not all *errores*. The following example shows the recording of this behavior.

Child:	<u>el</u>	AC	<u>carro</u>	R		[One error]
Text:	la		casa			[One AC]

12. If a child spells or sounds out the letters of a word, record capitals for spelling (as in *AYUDA*) and record letter or cluster breaks (as in *a-y-u-da-mos*) for sounding out.

13. Directional attack on the printed text is observed by telling the child to “*Leélo con tu dedo.*” Sometimes you may notice signs that tell you the young reader is not following the directional rules for attending to print. To check on this select a few lines of print during the reading and say to the child, “*Leélo con tu dedo.*”

A brief observation will often be sufficient but extend the observation if you need to understand more about his behavior. Even if teachers do not find pointing a desirable teaching prompt, they will still need to use it to collect some evidence of starting points, direction of scanning, and lapses or confusions from beginning readers.



14. As soon as the reading ends, ask yourself, “How did the reading of that text sound?” Add a comment at the end of the *Registro progresivo* or the designated fluency section, depending on the form being used.
15. Other behaviors. The conventions for recording and scoring relate only to correct responses, *errores* and *autocorrecciones*. Other behaviors include pausing, sounding out the letters, and splitting words into parts. Research evidence has shown that teachers’ records of such behaviors are much less reliable and cannot be included in the scoring or analysis.

A *Registro progresivo* from a child who is making many *errores* is hard to record and score but the rule is to record as much of the behavior as you can and analyze objectively what is recorded.

How the reading sounds

Describe the reading behavior recorded. It is important to listen closely to the reading as it occurs, since it provides information about the child’s current literacy learning. Immediately following the reading and before you begin to analyze the detail of the record, write a few lines on what you just observed, your intuitive summation of the child’s reading. This should be an overall reaction.

Comment on what the reader did well.

- Was the text read at a good pace, or was it slow, or too fast?
- Was he reading groups of words together in a phrased way?
- Did the child’s intonation and expression indicate understanding of the text?

Attend particularly to change over previous readings.

Assessment and comprehension

Registros progresivos should be valued because they adhere to good assessment practices. Some teachers wish to add retelling or comprehension questions to the taking of a *Registro progresivo*. Here are some comments and cautions.

- Comprehension is very dependent upon the difficulty level of the text. It makes no sense to assess comprehension on a hard text, nor on an easy text. If the text is at an appropriate instructional level for the child, then that tells the teacher she can expect and teach for understanding.
- Because different teachers ask different questions, their comprehension questions provide an unreliable gauge of a child's understanding of text.
- Research suggests that the answers to comprehension questions depend more on the difficulty of the sentence structure of the question than on the child's reading.

The reliability and validity of these assessments are not improved when teachers cannot agree on the scoring or when what teachers do is non-standard, like asking questions which differ in content, form or purpose.

Conversation about the story after taking *Registros progresivos* adds to the teacher's understanding of the reader in useful ways and leads the child into discourse about stories.

A record before scoring

The following page from Ernesto's reading could have been made on a blank piece of paper. It shows 43 *palabras actuales* and was only the first part of the *Registro progresivo* that was taken. The scoring of *errores* (E) and *autocorrecciones* (AC) on the right-hand side is discussed on the following pages. Reread the text to yourself as you think the child read it.

Ernesto’s Record

Pages of text	Registro progresivo	E	AC
Hacía mucho calor	<u>Hay</u> ✓ ✓ Hacía		
en la selva,	✓ ✓ <u>se-</u> <u>serpiente</u> selva		
y a la víbora	✓ ✓ ✓ <u>vi-</u> ✓ víbora		
le dolía la cabeza.	✓ <u>duele</u> <u>do-</u> <u>do-</u> ✓ R ✓ R ₂ dolía D		
Entonces, llegó el elefante.	✓ <u>llega</u> ✓ ✓ llegó		
—Yo te voy a quitar	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ <u>q-</u> <u>que-</u> <u>quebrar</u> quitar		
el dolor—le dijo,	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
y le hizo aire	✓ ✓ ✓ <u>a-</u> R ₁ aire D		
con las orejas.	✓ ✓ ✓		
Pero a la víbora	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
le seguía doliendo	✓ <u>se-</u> <u>siguió</u> ✓ seguía		
la cabeza.	<u>su</u> AC ✓ la		

The teacher made this summary:

Muchas veces Ernesto buscó integrando todas las fuentes de información (información visual = primera letra o parte). Cuando volvió a leer notó más información visual. A veces buscó con solamente información visual (primera parte), y luego siguió con otro intento que integró el sentido y la estructura. Autocorrigió una vez con la información visual cuando descuidó la información visual.

SCORING OF ERRORES AND AUTOCORRECCIONES

Review the *Registros progresivos* of the child's behavior on the book(s) you have selected and consider what was happening as the child read. Consider each *error* only up to and including the *error* (not the unread text).

Conventions for scoring

In counting the numbers of *errores*, some judgements must be made but the following have been found workable.

1. Credit the child with any correct or corrected words.

Child:	<u>dijo</u>	<u>el</u>	<u>chivo</u>	
Text:	dice	el	borrego	
Score:	X	✓	X	[Two errors]

2. There is no penalty for trials which are eventually correct.

A.

Child:	<u>roja</u>	<u>rojos</u>	<u>AC</u>	
Text:	rojo			
Score:	—	—	✓	[No error] [One AC]

B.

Child:	<u>el</u>	<u>la</u>	<u>las</u>	<u>AC</u>
Text:	los			
Score:	—	—	—	✓
				[No error] [One AC]

C.

Child:	<u>en-</u>	<u>enqui-</u>	<u>✓</u>	
Text:	encima			
Score:	—	—	✓	[No error]

In example C the reader made two attempts to solve the word “*encima*,” the teacher wrote “*enqui-*” as the best way she could record what she thought he said and then the child reached a solution. This is considered to be solving behavior and there was no substitution of a word.

3. *Inserciones* add *errores* so that a child can have more *errores* than there are words in a line.

Child:	<u>No</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>dice</u>	<u>el</u>	<u>gato</u>	
Text:	No	—	—	dijo	la	gata	
Score:	✓	X	X	X	X	X	[Five errors]

4. However, the child cannot receive a minus score for a page. The lowest page score is 0.
5. *Omissiones*. If a word, line or sentence is omitted each word is counted as an *error*. If pages are omitted (perhaps because two pages were turned together) they are not counted as *errores*. Note that in this case, the number of words on the omitted pages must be deducted from the *palabras actuales* before the calculation.
6. Repeated *errores*. If the child makes an error (for example “*dijo*” for “*dijeron*”) and then substitutes this word repeatedly, it counts as an *error* every time; but substitution of a proper noun (for example “*Marco*” for “*Marcos*” or “*Charly*” for “*Bonita*”) is counted only the first time (even though various alternate substitutions are made).
7. Multiple *errores* and *autocorrecciones*. If a child makes two or more *errores* (for example reads a phrase wrongly), each word is an *error*. If he then corrects all these *errores*, each corrected word is an *autocorrección*.
8. Broken words.
- Where a word is pronounced as two words (for example *a/quí*) even when this is backed up by pointing as if it were two words, this is regarded as an *error* of pronunciation not as an *error* of reading, unless what is said is matched to a different word.
 - Childish pronunciations such as “*onde*” for “*donde*” and “*sacetines*” for “*calcetines*” are counted as correct.
9. Inventions defeat the system. When the young child is creatively producing his own version of the story, the scoring system finally breaks down and the judgement “*inventando*” is recorded for that page, story or book.
10. “*Trátalo otra vez.*” When the child is in a tangle this instruction, which does not involve teaching, can be given. It counts as one *error* and only the second attempt is scored (see Conventions for scoring #9).

11. Fewest *errores*. If there are alternative ways of scoring responses a general principle is to choose the method that gives the fewest possible *errores* as in B below.

A.

Child:	<u>El</u>	<u>pan</u>	<u>fue</u>	<u>por</u>	<u>el</u>	<u>camino</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	
Text:	El	pan	se	fue	rodando	por	el	camino	
Score:	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	[Six errors]

B.

Child:	<u>El</u>	<u>pan</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>fue</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>por</u>	<u>el</u>	<u>camino</u>	
Text:	El	pan	se	fue	rodando	por	el	camino	
Score:	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	[Two errors]

- C. Sometimes contractions need to be dealt with under the fewest *errores* rule. When the reader says “a el” for “al” or “de el” for “del,” the fewest *errores* rule would apply and this would count as one *error*.

12. Accents. If the child fails to accentuate the word according to the written accent or adds an inappropriate accent, this will alter the text’s meaning and should count as one *error*.

Child:	<u>esta</u>	
Text:	está	[One error]
Child:	<u>hacia</u>	
Text:	hacia	[One error]

13. Syllabication. In Spanish it is important to record syllabication and *consider the efficiency of the syllabication* to analyze the effectiveness of processing behaviors.

Due to Spanish’s orthographic transparency and consistent phoneme-grapheme relationships, emerging readers may begin to develop a syllabic approach to reading. This behavior requires careful observation as students begin to use more visual information in their reading. To effectively document this behavior, syllabication behaviors are recorded in conjunction with successful solving when applicable.

When a child relies predominantly on syllabication as their primary approach to text, fluency is likely to be compromised. Teachers should be alert to this pattern which will become evident through systematic documentation on the *Registro progresivo*.

The example below may indicate this type of approach.

Child:	<u>Mi</u>	<u>her-ma-no</u>	<u>es-tá</u>	<u>en</u>	<u>la</u>	<u>es-cue-la</u>
Text:	Mi	hermano	está	en	la	escuela

Observation reveals that the child is processing text syllable by syllable, even when encountering high frequency words or text supported by meaning and structure. This approach becomes evident only through direct observation of authentic reading. By carefully documenting these behaviors on the *Registro progresivo*, teachers can accurately assess how syllabication functions within the child's overall reading process.

14. Translanguaging behaviors: The following examples are specifically developed for use in the United States, where Spanish-speaking children typically have significant daily exposure to English.

- A. One type of translanguaging behavior is when children simultaneously apply meaning-based cues from English while using grammatical structures from Spanish.

Child:	<u>vive</u>	<u>en</u>	<u>una</u>	<u>casa</u>	<u>blue</u>
Text:	vive	en	una	casa	azul
Score:	✓	✓	✓	✓	X

[One error]

In the above example, the child used meaning from English to get to the word “blue” and used Spanish language structure to place the adjective after the noun.

- B. When reading in Spanish, children sometimes simultaneously draw upon both meaning and structure patterns from English while also utilizing Spanish meaning and language structures.

Child:	<u>vive</u>	<u>en</u>	<u>una</u>	<u>blue</u>	<u>casa</u>
Text:	vive	en	una	casa	azul
Score:	✓	✓	✓	X	X

[Two errors]

In the above example, the child used meaning and language structure in Spanish to read “vive” (present tense verb in the third person), “en” and “una” (feminine indefinite article that agrees with “casa”). The student also used meaning and language structure from English to read “blue casa,” using the English structure of placing the adjective before the noun.

- C. A third type of translanguaging behavior is when children draw on meaning from English while simultaneously applying language structure and visual information from Spanish.

<i>Child:</i>	<u>vive</u>	<u>en</u>	<u>una</u>	<u>casa</u>	<u>red</u>
<i>Text:</i>	vive	en	una	casa	roja
<i>Score:</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	X

[One error]

In the above example, the child used meaning from English to read “red” while also using visual information from Spanish (*roja*) as well as Spanish language structure (adjective follows noun).

Quantifying the *Registro progresivo*

The four boxes on the right provide the calculations corresponding to the steps outlined below. The conversion table provides quick access to accuracy rates.

Step 1 Count the *palabras actuales*, omitting titles.

Step 2 Count the *errores* and enter the *proporción de errores*.

Step 3 Use the conversion table to find the *exactitud*.

Step 4 Work out the *proporción de autocorrección*.

Here is one way to think about *autocorrecciones*. There were 15 *errores* in 150 *palabras actuales* of text and the 5 *autocorrecciones* represent an extra 5 potential *errores*. Altogether the child made 5 *autocorrecciones* in 20 chances to *autocorregir*.

Conversion table

Proporción de errores	Porcentaje de exactitud	
1:200	99.5	Good opportunities for teachers to observe children's processing of texts
1:100	99	
1:50	98	
1:35	97	
1:25	96	
1:20	95	
1:17	94	
1:14	93	
1:12.5	92	
1:11.75	91	
1:10	90	The reader tends to lose the support of the meaning of the text
1:9	89	
1:8	87.5	
1:7	85.5	
1:6	83	
1:5	80	
1:4	75	
1:3	66	
1:2	50	

Step 1

Count the
palabras actuales

150

Step 2

Proporción de errores

errores
palabras actuales
15
150
1 : 10
One in ten

Step 3

% de exactitud
 $100 - \frac{E}{PA} \times \frac{100}{1}$

$100 - \frac{15}{150} \times \frac{100}{1}$
= 90%

Step 4

Proporción de autocorrección

$\frac{AC}{E + AC}$

$\frac{5}{15 + 5}$
1:4
One in four

Turn back and score the previous *Registro progresivo*. Put one count in the *error* column for every *error* and one count in the *autocorrección* column for every *autocorrección*. Total each column and work out the *proporción de errores*, the *exactitud*, and the *proporción de autocorrección*.

Records for two competent readers

The next two examples capture the reading behaviors of two competent readers and provide the teacher with opportunities to read back from the record what Lorena and Israel did. These records are used to introduce an analysis of how the text was read in the next section, Interpreting a *Registro progresivo*.

Lorena read well. There were no *autocorrecciones* to analyze on this page of her *Registro progresivo* but her two *errores* allowed her teacher to identify one or two things to talk about. The teacher could talk with her about the *omisión* of “Pérez,” how what she said sounded right and made sense but differed from what the author wrote. Important? Perhaps not. A second discussion might be about how she could work more effectively on the information in the middle of unfamiliar words, which may well be a crucial shift in processing which Lorena needs to make.

Lorena’s Record

Pages of text	Registro Progresivo	Información Utilizada	
		E SEV	AC SEV
La calabaza siguió creciendo.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
Aplastó la cerca del jardín.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
—Demasiado grande para ser una cama doble	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
—dijo el señor Pérez—.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
Pero si consigo unas ruedas	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
y un motor,	✓ ✓ ✓		
podría ser un buen camión.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
—¡Seguro que sí! —dijo la señora Pérez.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ - Pérez		
Pasó una semana.	✓ ✓ ✓		
Ahora, la calabaza	✓ ✓ ✓		
sobrepasaba el jardín.	<u>sopasaba</u> ✓ ✓ sobrepasaba		
		S (E) V	

Although “*sopasaba*” is an invented word, the “*so-aba*” clearly fits a common way of creating a verb in Spanish; it is a structural feature of the language.

Israel made a number of *errores* on the next text but he often *autocorrigió*, without any assistance. (Only a part of the record is shown and it has been simplified.)

Israel's Record

Pages of text	Registro Progresivo	Información Utilizada	
		E SEV	AC SEV
Tú no quieres saber	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
lo que comen los pillos	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ <u>pillitos</u>	(S)(E)(V)	
de almuerzo.	✓ ✓ pillos		
Es horrible, es espantoso,	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
es totalmente asqueroso.	✓ ✓ ✓	(S)(E)(V)	
Pero tal vez quieres echarles un vistazo.	✓ ✓ ✓ <u>quieren</u> ✓ <u>una</u> AC <u>visto</u> AC	(S)(E)(V) S E V	
Los pillos comen	✓ ✓ ✓ <u>quieres</u> un vistazo	(S)(E)(V) (S)(E)(V)	
moscas muertas de almuerzo.	✓ ✓ <u>para</u> AC ✓	(S)(E)(V) S E V	
¡Mastica, mastica, mastica!	de ✓ ✓ ✓	(S)(E)(V)	
¡Cruje, cruje, cruje!	<u>crunch</u> AC ✓ ✓ cruje	(S)(E)(V) S E V	
Tú no quieres saber qué beben los pillos.	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ <u>le</u> ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
Es horrible, espantoso,	- ✓ ✓ ✓		
y huele horroroso.	✓ ✓ <u>horrible</u> AC horroroso	(S)(E)(V) S E V	
Te enfermarás	✓ <u>enfermas</u> enfermarás	(S)(E)(V)	
con solo pensar en oler	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		
lo que ellos	✓ ✓ <u>ellas</u> AC	(S)(E)(V) S E V	
acostumbran beber.	ellos ✓ ✓		

His teacher summarized the analysis of the reading like this:

Israel buscó integrando todas las fuentes de información (información visual = palabra raíz). Automonitoreó y autocorrigió con más información visual. Intentó todas las palabras.

INTERPRETING A REGISTRO PROGRESIVO

There is another level of analysis that will help teachers to work out what information in the text the reader is attending to. To do this you must give closer attention to analyzing the *error* and *autocorrección* behaviors. The analysis takes a little time but it can uncover some important things about how the child is processing print.

Readers of text appear to make decisions about the quality of the message they are getting. One kind of theory would say the child is recalling words and attacking words; another kind of theory would say that the child is using information of various kinds to make a choice among possible responses. He is trying to get the best fit with the limited knowledge he has. *It is this second kind of theory that guides the following discussion.*

Think about the errores in the record

It is important to analyze every *error* to identify the kinds of information used. Look only at the sentence up to the *error*. Ask yourself, “What led the child to do or say that?” For every *error*, ask yourself at least three questions:

***Sentido* or *Significado* (S):** Did the meaning or the messages of the text influence the *error*? Perhaps the reader brought a different meaning to the author’s text?

***Estructura* (E):** Did the structure (syntax) of the sentence up to the *error* influence the response? If the *error* occurs on the first word of the sentence, it is marked as positive for structure if the new sentence could have started that way.

***Información Visual* (V):** Did visual information from the print influence any part of the *error*: letter, cluster or word?

Where an *error* is made, write the letters S (*sentido*), E (*estructura*), V (*información visual*) in the *error* column. Circle the appropriate letter if the child’s *error* showed that he could have been led by *sentido*, *estructura*, or *información visual* (which will include letter form and/or letter-sound relationships) from the sentence so far. (See the section “Processing the information in print” for more explanation of the V for *información visual* in print category.) You will probably be circling more than one kind of information. Do this for all *errores* even where they have been *autocorregidos*. This first attempt is important.

Scan the record to answer two other questions

- Did the child's oral language produce the *error*, with little influence from the print?
- Was the child clearly getting some phonemic information from the printed letters?
What makes you suspect this?

These two questions cannot be used in scoring a record because teachers cannot agree upon their interpretations, and the information is therefore unreliable. However, if the reader sometimes responds as if he were “just talking,” or if specific phonemic information is used, then certainly teachers can note these things in their records without including them in the formal summation of text reading.

Next, think about the *autocorrecciones*

Often readers make *errores* and without any prompting, work on the text in some way and *autocorrigen* the *errores*. It is as if they had a feeling that something was not quite right. Ask yourself, “What led the child to do this?”

Where an *autocorrección* has occurred, write the letters S, E and V in the *autocorrección* column and circle the appropriate one to record whether the extra information the reader used was *sentido* and/or *estructura* and/or *información visual*. Examine each *autocorrección* carefully. The corrected response will fit with all three sources of information, but it is not helpful to automatically circle all three as this will not indicate what led the child to make the *autocorrección*.

Consider the pattern of responses

Now look at the overall pattern of the responses you have circled. Look for patterns in the circling and bring your analysis of *errores* and *autocorrecciones* together into a written summary. (It is important to look at what happens across the entire record because a single *error* or *autocorrección* could have been unusual or accidental for the reader.)

Write your analysis of the pattern indicated in the child's use of the different kinds of information at the top of the *Registro progresivo* next to the appropriate level of the text. This statement about the sources of information used and neglected, and whether they were used together, is essential to guide your subsequent teaching.

There is a completed *Registro progresivo* on the following page. Note the following.

- Analysis of the use of *sentido* and *estructura* and *información visual* is of little value unless it is done carefully.
- Consider the sentence only up to the *error* (not the unread text).
- Do not try to analyze *omisiones* and *inserciones*.
- The pattern of responses is merely a guide to what information is neglected, what is made a priority, and when the reader can combine the processing of different kinds of information
- Avoid analyses for which you have no theoretical support.
- Always write a statement about how the reading sounds at the end of the record or in the designated space.

REGISTRO PROGRESIVO

Nombre: Gabriel Fecha: 5-13-25 F. de N.: 10-26 Edad: 7 años 6 meses

Escuela: Nueva Escuela Observador: MM

Títulos del texto	<u>Errores</u> Palabras actuales	Proporción de error	Exactitud	Proporción de autocorrección
1. Fácil _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
2. Instructivo <u>La señora Lávalo Todo y la gran bañera (Hameray)</u>	<u>5/81</u>	1: <u>16</u>	<u>94</u> %	1: <u>3</u>
3. Difícil _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____

Movimiento direccional

Análisis de errores y autocorrecciones

Información utilizada o descuidada [Significado (S), Estructura o Sintaxis (E), Visual (V)]

Fácil _____

Instructivo Mayormente buscó integrando todas las fuentes de información (mayoría de la palabra). AC 3 errores con información visual. Repitió frases cortas para AC.

Difícil _____

Cotejo de la información (Observe que este comportamiento cambia con el tiempo)

dijo	AC
contestó	

Análisis de errores y autocorrecciones

Pág.	Título	Conteo		autocorrecciones	
		E	AC	E SEV	AC SEV
2	La señora Lávalo Todo y la gran bañera-13/201				
4	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ Ra-dian-te ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓				
6	✓ ✓ <u>dijo</u> AC ✓ ✓ contestó ✓ <u>recuerdas</u> R AC recuerda ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ <u>Tienen</u> ✓ ✓ <u>en</u> ✓ Tendrán de ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		I	SEV SEV SEV SEV	SEV SEV
7	<u>Tri-</u> A - ✓ ✓ ✓ Triqui TT D <u>sonó</u> ✓ ✓ sonaba ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓		I	SEV SEV	
	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ <u>con</u> R AC ✓ como <u>grande</u> ✓ gran		I	SEV SEV	SEV

Paso apropiado con frases de 3-4 palabras. Buena atención a puntuación con expresión y entonación.

PROCESSING THE INFORMATION IN PRINT

When teachers ask themselves ‘What does my record tell me?’ they bring their own beliefs about literacy (their personal theory of literacy learning) and their background of professional experience to the task. Interpretations of *Registros progresivos* are heavily weighted with the theoretical view the teacher already holds.

Marie Clay’s interpretations of *Registros progresivos* fit with her theory that progress depends on an increasing complexity in processing which enables the reader to read more difficult texts. The child works with several different types of knowledge about print (which Clay calls different kinds of information).

To explain an *error*, consider what information might have led the child up to the point of the *error*. To explain an *autocorrección*, consider what kind of information might have led the child to spontaneously correct the *error*.

When teachers have different theories about what is important for the early reader to learn, they could interpret the same behavior record in different ways. They may ask quite different questions of the data because they emphasize the importance of different things. Extensive research into what young readers do as they read text, and careful training of teachers as observers, ensure that behavioral records will look the same even though teacher interpretations might differ.

For example, examine the attention given in these analyses to ‘V’ standing for the *información visual* in print. During acquisition of literacy learning the *información visual* becomes intricately linked to phonemic information (the sounds of speech or phonology) so that children could probably be said to ‘hear’ a letter or cluster of letters they are looking at. Theorists tell us that *información visual* also links directly to a vocabulary of known words (spelling patterns or orthography). So, theoretically, the symbol ‘V’ in the analysis of *Registros progresivos* stands for the stimulus information on the page of print irrespective of whether the processing is through a phonological system or a visual system. This is a point at which teachers might differ in their understanding of what a reader was doing.

What if a reliable behavioral record does not support our expectations? Unable to deny that the actual behavior did not occur, we probably need to adjust any of our assumptions that are not supported by recorded data. So it is important that we have reliable records.

Registros progresivos are useful if we remember the following things.

- Record *error* behavior in full as all the information is needed when interpreting the records.
- Poor observation will reduce the number of *errores* and inflate the accuracy score.
- Reliability drops as accuracy levels fall because there are more *errores* to be recorded.
- Observation of poor readers is difficult and rigorous training is required to reach agreement on scoring because of the complexity of the *error* behavior.
- The most reliable records would be obtained by scoring an observation immediately following its manual recording.

Older readers: different signs of progress

If *Registros progresivos* are used with older readers, there should be a special reason for taking them. They are excellent for recording the early phases of literacy acquisition but, before long, what the reader is doing becomes too fast and too sophisticated for teachers to observe in real time. Literacy processing shifts gradually towards this.

Some of the changes to look for in older readers are these.

- It is an important sign of progress when *errores* contain several kinds of correct information even though the final decision is not quite correct. As the reader learns to process more information more quickly, behaviors change and new things can be noted. *Errores* occur even though the reader clearly used *sentido* and *estructura* and *información visual* to get a response (for example, *dormido* for *durmiendo*).
- Another change occurs when more proficient readers utter only the word beginning and then give the whole word. These are examples:
do-/dolió pe-/pero i-/igual de-/desayuno
- A similar kind of thing happens when the older reader corrects what might have been an *error* before giving the whole word, as in
mes-/mascota gar-/grande be-/detrás
- Sometimes there is more *repetición* as the older reader tries to regroup words in phrases.
- With older readers, *autocorrecciones* occur less frequently. Theoretically, we suppose that it has ‘gone underground’ and the reader is correcting *errores* before saying them. If the teacher introduces a more challenging text, the process of *autocorregir* may reappear. Even adults reading aloud can be heard to *autocorregir*.

Records of individual and group progress

Education is primarily concerned with change in the learning of individual students, yet educators rarely document change over time in individuals as they learn. It is not difficult to collect evidence of change over time in early literacy learning, particularly from young children at the beginning of formal education.

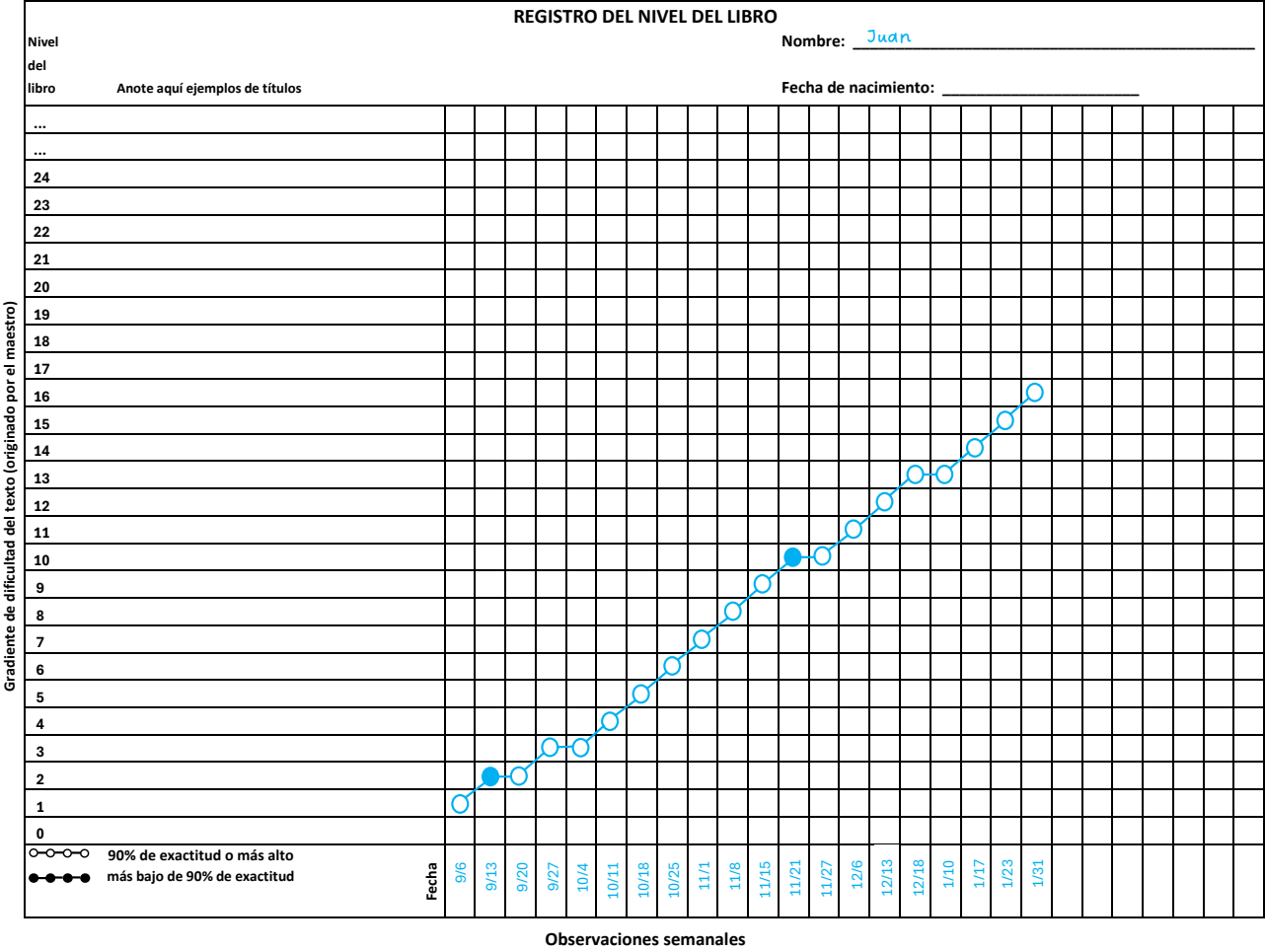
Three ways of using *Registros progresivos* to capture individual progress over time are shown below. A more detailed record of books read is shown in Clay, 2015b, p 47.

- In Rosalba's case, the teacher grouped the books that her class read into approximate levels of difficulty and placed numbers for these levels at the left side of her sheet. Then she took *Registros progresivos* of Rosalba's reading of previously read texts on two occasions several months apart, and entered the names of the books Rosalba found *fácil*, *instructivo*, or *difícil*. Rosalba's progress is clear.
- A different record was used by a teacher who was keeping a close eye on Juan's progress by monitoring it frequently. This teacher used the *Registro del nivel del libro* sheet (see next page) and entered the date of the observation along the horizontal line. She chose to take a record once a week of the reading of the current book after Juan had read it at least once (seen text). Based on the initial assessment, she entered an open circle for the *instructivo* level of text read, because no other story read by the child reached the 90 percent accuracy or above criterion. The next week she raised the difficulty level of the text and Juan's accuracy level fell below 90%, so the teacher used a dark circle on her graph. After one more week of teaching she raised the difficulty level again. (Meanwhile Juan read several new texts but all at the same level of difficulty.) From then onwards, as the teacher raised the text difficulty, Juan was able to meet the challenge except for once.
- A teacher can follow several different children, using the same plotting procedures (see next page). There are problems of clustering if the children are homogeneous in their progress. Graphs of progress made for a group of children will show individual differences in starting levels, in paths of progress, in fast or slow take-off and in final outcome levels. The teacher would be able to quickly identify children who are reading material that is too easy or too difficult, preventing them from working in the context of mostly instructional text. It also allows teachers to identify any children who temporarily need more of her attention. This is one way to monitor the progress of a group.

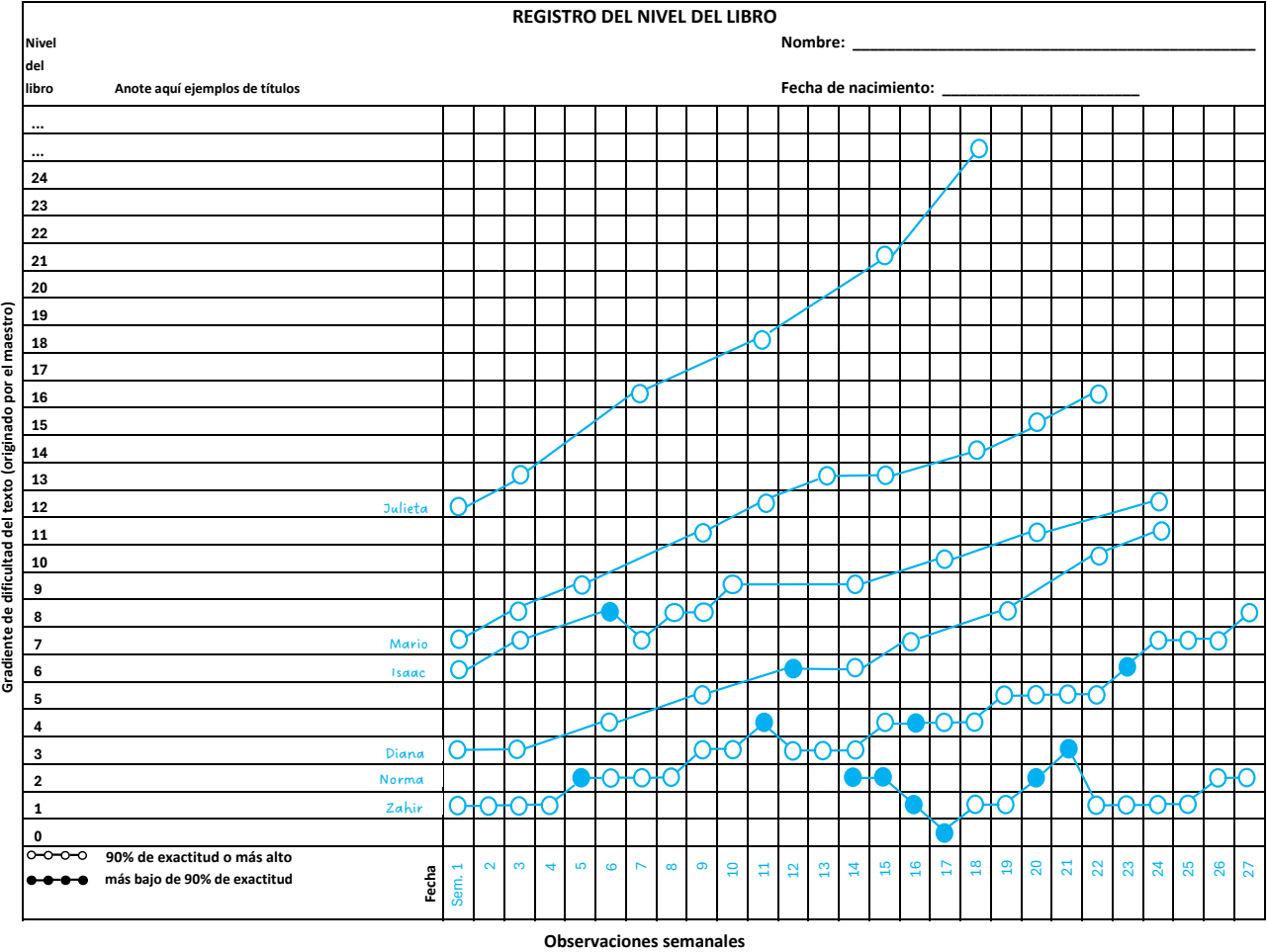
Rosalba's progress at two observation points

Book Level	Progress
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	Time 1 (date)
6	<i>El basquetbol</i> (fácil)
7	<i>Amigos de nieve</i> (instructivo)
8	<i>¡Vienen los pollitos!</i> (difícil)
9	
10	
11	
12	Time 2 (date)
13	<i>El diente de Julio</i> (fácil)
14	<i>Los 3 cerditos</i> (instructivo)
15	<i>Un asiento en el autobús</i> (difícil)
16	
17	
18	

A weekly record of Juan’s progress



Teachers may follow the progress of several children



Escala de lo Difícil que es el Texto (Originado(a) por el/la Maestro(a))

Nivel del Libro	Anote aquí ejemplos de títulos	REGISTRO DEL NIVEL DEL LIBRO										Nombre:	Fecha de Nacimiento:
...													
...													
24													
23													
22													
21													
20													
19													
18													
17													
16													
15													
14													
13													
12													
11													
10													
9													
8													
7													
6													
5													
4													
3													
2													
1													
0													
0-0-0-0 90% de exactitud o más alto ●-●-●-● más bajo de 90% de exactitud													

Fecha

Observaciones Semanales

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING *REGISTROS PROGRESIVOS* IN CLASSROOM SETTINGS

School entry checks

Teachers will have their own ways of collecting and recording information about learners from the time they enter school. *Registros progresivos* can be taken on children's earliest attempts to read little books, enriching the teacher's observations.

Education systems tend to be highly selective about what they use for a baseline assessment of early learning. Instead of limiting observations to a measure of letter knowledge, teachers could use a range of tasks because they would be more likely to capture the areas that reveal the strengths of individual children. *Registros progresivos* might be part of such a broad-ranging assessment for particular children.

For teaching individuals

Using the *Registro progresivo* for teaching purposes, teachers might

- first try to find a book level appropriate for a child, then try an easier book and a harder book
- check a child's progress after individual instruction
- evaluate whether a lift in text level is appropriate
- observe particular difficulties in individual children in order to modify instructional emphasis
- monitor progress in order to place a child in an appropriate instructional group or class
- build a cumulative record of an individual's progress over time.

For teaching groups

Using *Registros progresivos* to inform group instruction, teachers might

- group children who could work together
- evaluate progress and see when regrouping is desirable
- see how different the processing of particular children is, and
- give attention to an individual learner during group instruction.

Registros progresivos may be used to capture the oral reading behavior of older readers (see Older readers: Different signs of progress section) when there is a particular purpose for observing this (Johnston, 1996, 2000).

Evidence of what is being emphasized in the classroom

If teachers take records of text reading with a wide sample of children, they will quickly discover which things are fostered by the classroom instruction.

Evidence of good outcomes may be observed. For example, most of the children may be

- getting it all together smoothly
- working on new words in ways that surprise and impress the teacher
- enjoying the stories and discussing features of those stories
- showing improved control over structure in phrased reading.

On the other hand teachers may observe

- word-by-word reading
- sounding out words in single phonemes
- syllabication of multisyllabic words
- not attending to meaning and reading nonsense
- ignoring first letters or not going beyond those
- not attending to detail in the middle of a word.

If any of these behaviors persist, they may indicate a problem for a particular group of learners.

If the instruction is changed so that new emphases are introduced, like a shift to asking for more fluent, phrased reading, or teaching readers how to approach multisyllabic words, then *Registros progresivos* can be used to monitor whether the changes that are made to instruction are having the desired effect. *Registros progresivos* can help teachers improve the reading of individuals, but they can also be used for planning and monitoring shifts in the instruction delivered in classrooms.

VARIATIONS OF *REGISTROS PROGRESIVOS*

As Descubriendo la Lectura resources are regularly updated and refined, teachers should consult with their teacher leaders and trainers or visit myliteracycouncil.org to access current protocols and approved variations.

REGISTRO PROGRESIVO

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____ F. de N.: _____ Edad: _____ años _____ meses

Escuela: _____ Observador: _____

Títulos del texto	<u>Errores</u> Palabras actuales	Proporción de error	Exactitud	Proporción de autocorrección
1. Fácil _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
2. Instructivo _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____
3. Difícil _____	_____	1: _____	_____ %	1: _____

Movimiento direccional _____

Análisis de errores y autocorrecciones

Información utilizada o descuidada [Significado (S), Estructura o Sintaxis (E), Visual (V)]

Fácil _____

Instructivo _____

Difícil _____

Cotejo de la información (Observe que este comportamiento cambia con el tiempo)

Análisis de errores y
autocorrecciones

Pág.	Título	Conteo		Información Utilizada	
		E	AC	E SEV	AC SEV

			Conteo		Análisis de errores y autocorrecciones	
Pág.	Título		E	AC	Información Utilizada	
					E SEV	AC SEV

Chapter 8

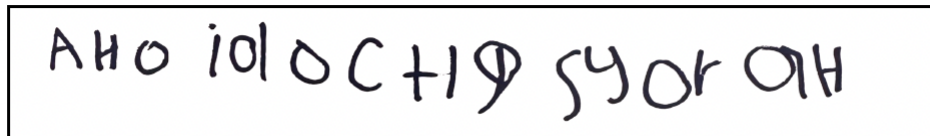
Observation task for *Identificación de letras*

IDENTIFICACIÓN DE LETRAS

Learning how to see that the symbols of any alphabet are different one from the other is a huge learning task. Learning to identify a letter by its shape is different from two other kinds of learning that have to occur – learning to write that symbol or learning to link it to a sound or phoneme.

An alphabet may contain as few as 30 letters (Māori) or more than 60 or 70 symbols. A child beginning literacy education in Spanish will encounter 27 lower case letters, 27 upper case letters, and two common ways of writing “a” and “g,” making a total score of 56 symbols to check.

The early writing sample below illustrates how few letters the school entrant may be able to write and how specific to the individual that knowledge is.



One common practice is for teachers to begin the teaching of letters in alphabetical order. This seems to be a neat and efficient way to go. It is more effective, however, to find out which letters the child knows and then seek a fast way to help him to learn the others. When teachers understand this faster route to learning they find ways to monitor individual progress to ensure that all letters are learned.

If children have paid little attention to print during their early childhood years, they will need to learn to distinguish between the symbols of the alphabet after they come to school. Rather slowly they will begin to notice what makes one symbol different from another. Teachers seek ways to speed up this learning.

USING THE *IDENTIFICACIÓN DE LETRAS* TASK

The *Identificación de letras* task is designed to find out what a child is noticing. A name, a sound, a syllable, or a word beginning with the letter or sound, are all acceptable signs that the child is identifying a letter in some way, and that is his first learning challenge.

Administration

Assess all letters, lower case and upper case. Make this a standard task, the same for every child, by using the large print alphabet provided in this resource. It can be copied on cardstock for this purpose. Ensure that the child reads across the lines so that the letters are treated in a random order (and not in alphabetical order) by using a masking card to reveal one horizontal line of letters at a time. This observation task should take from 5 to 10 minutes. Use the questions provided in this resource (and only these questions) to get the child to respond to the letters.

Do not ask *only* for sounds, or names, or for words that begin with the letter or sound.

Only one way of distinguishing letters needs to be given by the child. Attaching a second or third label to the letter will be easy once the letter has been distinguished from all the other letters. If the child hesitates, start with the first letter of his name, and then go to the first line. Point to every letter in turn to keep the child's attention on the task and work across the lines.

To introduce the task, say to the child:

- ¿Qué son éstas?
- ¿Puedes encontrar algunas que tú conoces?

Point to each letter in the horizontal lines. Say:

- ¿Qué es ésta?

If the child does not respond, use one or more of these questions:

- ¿Sabes el nombre de la letra?
- ¿Qué sonido tiene?
- ¿Sabes una palabra que empieza así?
 - For ñ say: ¿Sabes una palabra que tiene este sonido?

Try to avoid bias towards any one of them by using the questions variably.

Then moving on to other letters, say:

- ¿Qué es ésta? ¿Y ésta?

Return to the questions above as necessary.

Recording

- Use the *Hoja de resultados de la Identificación de letras* (provided in this resource).
- Mark the A column (*alfabético*) for an alphabetical response with a checkmark. (✓)
- Mark the S column (*sonido*) for a sound response with a checkmark. (✓)
- Mark the S column (*sílaba*) for a syllable response by writing the syllable.
- Mark the P column (*palabra*) for a word response beginning with that sound by writing the word.
- If the child responds with a correct letter name or sound in English mark E (English) or I (*Inglés*) next to the checkmark in the letter or sound column. (✓) E, (✓) I
- If the child responds with a word beginning with the correct letter sound in English (mom for m, snake for s), record the English word in the P column.
- Record the child's incorrect responses in the RI column (*respuesta incorrecta*).
- Record a dot for no response. (•)
- Notes to consider for the comments section might include:
 - › pace
 - › the child's response to “¿Qué son éstas?”
 - › preferred mode of identifying letters

Scoring

- Score a response as correct when the child gives:
 - › The alphabet name
 - › A sound that is acceptable for that letter
 - › A syllable that is acceptable for that letter
 - › A word that starts with that letter or sound
 - › A name, sound or word in English that is correct
- Acceptable responses:
 - › H, h can also be identified as *muda*
 - › Ñ, ñ is scored as correct if the student gives a word with that sound in the middle (*niño, baño*)
 - › Regional variations: if clarification is needed, prompt further.
- Find the subtotals for each kind of response – alphabetical, sound/syllable and word beginning.
- Total the child's score adding all three types of responses together and consult the stanine tables.

Achievement stanines

To compare the child's performance with that of other children, use the stanines provided in this resource. Look up the total raw score obtained by the child and read his scaled score, a number between 1 and 9. This scaled score is called a stanine and it provides a guide to how well the child compares with a sample of children of the same grade. If the score on the table is allocated across more than one stanine group, choose the lowest value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

You will find a general discussion of achievement stanines in this resource, why they are used, when they are helpful and what their limitations are.

Interpreting *Identificación de letras* scores

The record form contains information which can be used to guide instruction. It shows:

- the child's preferred mode of identifying letters
- the letters a child confuses (so that they can be kept apart during teaching)
- the unknown letters, and
- comments about the child's responding.

Following the observation, teaching should aim to improve the child's ability to distinguish all letters one from another

- at first, on any basis that works, including but not limited to letter-sound relationships, and work to expand the child's range of known letters
- as more and more letters are controlled, children become ready for systematic associations like alphabetical names or sound equivalents. When they know most of the letters, they are more able to be flexible and can consider alternative ways of labeling letters.

As it is possible and necessary for young children to completely master the particular set of letters in a language, one would expect a child to move gradually over time through the stanine score range until he reached perfect scoring for the symbols of the alphabet. An individual child's stanine score indicates his status relative to all children in the age group. Of particular value is the comparison of a child's scores at two points in time because this captures how much progress that child has made in the intervening period.

High progress children not only master the identification of all letters but after a year or so at school they can easily produce 56 letter names, 56 letter sounds or syllables and 56

words beginning with the letter. They have a broad foundation in letter learning which they can deal with in flexible ways. (But note that checking on all of these is not what the *Identificación de letras* task is for.)

Identificación de letras scores are sensitive to instructional procedures. Focused teaching of letter-sound relationships will result in responses to the items being mostly sounds rather than names, and the whole set of letters may be learned earlier or later under different kinds of instruction. For instance, the *método fonético* and *método silábico* are popular approaches for teaching Spanish reading. With these methods, students initially learn the five Spanish vowels, followed by the consonants m, p, s, and t. As a result, students using these approaches will likely become familiar with these letters before others. This is another reason why it is preferable to accept any of the four ways of distinguishing letters at first, because the teaching program may have turned the children's scoring towards one kind of responding. Any way of identifying the symbols is valuable in the beginning.

Limited prediction from *Identificación de letras*

Although letter identification is seen as one of the better predictors of literacy progress for school entrants in longitudinal research, the following cautions should be considered:

- *Identificación de letras* is not a stand-alone indicator of preparation for literacy learning.
- Letter names are a limited way of testing what children know about letters.
- Picking and choosing letters and not assessing the whole set may miss half of what some children know.
- This observation task is designed not for predicting progress but to find out what children do and do not know to be used as a guide for subsequent teaching.
- If the plan were to compare alphabet knowledge across two languages or scripts, careful thought should be given to whether differences exist in the number and range of symbols in the two languages, and to the frequency of symbol use in each language.

Cautions about assessing letter-sound relationships

If you are a teacher who feels unable to teach children to read unless they know all the letter-sound relationships first, you may want to repeat the *Identificación de letras* assessment on another day and this time say to the child, “¿Qué sonido tiene esta letra?” This makes the task harder, and being able to do this comes later than the standard procedure recommended above, where we ask, “¿Qué es ésta?” It is one way of knowing letters. It is not a measurement of all the knowledge that the child can bring to his early lessons. Although not a formal requirement of the survey, testing for knowledge of

sounds can be done later if the teacher needs to know about this.

Most of the struggling readers who were selected for an early literacy intervention knew many letter-sound relationships at the beginning of their supplementary teaching, and by the end there were only a few tricky ones left to learn.

A	F	K	P	Z	
B	H	O	J	U	
C	Y	L	Q	M	Ñ
D	N	S	X	I	E
G	R	V	T	W	
a	f	k	p	z	
b	h	o	j	u	
c	y	l	q	m	ñ
d	n	s	x	i	a
e	g	r	v	t	w
g					

RESULTADOS DE LA IDENTIFICACIÓN DE LETRAS

Fecha: _____

Nombre: _____ Edad: _____

RESULTADO:

/56

Observador: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____

GRUPO ESTANINA:

Revisado 1/2025

	A	S	Palabra	R.I.		A	S	Palabra	R.I.
A					a				
F					f				
K					k				
P					p				
Z					z				
B					b				
H					h				
O					o				
J					j				
U					u				
C					c				
Y					y				
L					l				
Q					q				
M					m				
Ñ					ñ				
D					d				
N					n				
S					s				
X					x				
I					i				
					a				
E					e				
G					g				
R					r				
V					v				
T					t				
W					w				
					g				

Total

Confusiones:

Letras desconocidas:

Comentarios:

Anotaciones:

A (Nombre Alfabético): anote con v
S (Sonido de la Letra): anote con v
S (Sonido de la Sílabas): anote la sílaba
Palabra: anote la palabra
R.I. (Respuesta Incorrecta): anote lo que dice el niño/la niña
Respuesta en Inglés: Anote la respuesta con 'I' (Inglés) o 'E' (English)

RESULTADO TOTAL:

Chapter 9

Observation task for *Lectura de palabras*

LECTURA DE PALABRAS

Standardized word tests used to measure reading achievement are based on the principle of sampling from the child's reading vocabulary. This cannot be a reliable approach until a child has acquired sufficient vocabulary to make sampling a feasible measurement strategy.

For an early measure of progress, a different approach is required. The principle then is to sample from that restricted corpus of words which the child has had some opportunities to learn. Any assessment of first-year instruction must be closely linked to that instruction. Word lists are compiled from the high frequency words in the reading materials that have been used in the school. The most frequently occurring words in the series of reading texts being used will probably provide a satisfactory source of test items.

The *Lectura de palabras* task was designed for Spanish-speaking students in Tucson, Arizona, who were using various Spanish language basal readers in 1989. Using the *Cornejo Spanish Word Frequency List* (Cornejo, 1980), the *Santillana Basal Spanish Reading Program* (Santillana Publishing Group, 1984), and the *Brigance Spanish Word Frequency List* (Brigance, 1984), frequently occurring words were compiled into lists. Three hundred first-grade children were asked to read these words, and a statistical measure called a *p* value was used to identify and compare the words that were most challenging and least challenging for them. These *p* values were calculated for both the fall and spring (Escamilla, 1992). The study's results showed that all three word lists contained words that varied in difficulty. The frequently used words from these sources are part of the vocabulary young Spanish-speaking learners are likely already familiar with.

USING THE *LECTURA DE PALABRAS* TASK

Administration

This task takes about two minutes to administer. Ask the child to read just one of the three lists, A, B, or C. Cover the other lists. Use the following questions (and only these questions) to prompt the child's responses.

To introduce the task, point to the practice word and say to the child:

- ¿Qué palabra es ésta?

Tell the child the practice word if necessary and never score it. Do not help with any other words.

Then, point to each word in turn. Say:

- ¿Qué palabra es ésta?

If the child does not respond to a word, move to the next one. Say:

- ¿Qué palabra es ésta?

Recording and Scoring

- Use the *Hoja de resultados de la Lectura de palabras* score sheet provided in this resource.
- Mark each correct response with a checkmark. (✓)
- Record a dot for no response. (•)
- Write any incorrect response beside the word.
- Note any solving behavior beside the word.
- English responses are counted as correct. For example, *me* and *come* are words that can be read either in Spanish or English and make sense. Mark English responses with a checkmark (✓) and the letter “E” (English) or “I” (*Inglés*).
- If the child corrects a word, record the incorrect response and write AC (*autocorrección*) beside it. Score the word as correct.
- Words mispronounced because of an accent are not counted as correct. For example, the student reads *ésta* for *está*.
- Syllabicated words that are not put back together are not counted as correct. For example: *ca-sa* is not counted as correct; *ca-sa/casa* or *ca-sa/ ✓* is counted as correct.

The score will indicate the extent to which a child is accumulating a reading vocabulary of the most frequently used words in various basal readers/texts during his first year at school. Scores should move gradually from low to high levels over that first year. The scores may be used, together with teachers’ recorded observations for book reading, for grouping children. Successive assessments will indicate whether a progressive change is occurring in the child’s reading of words.

Achievement stanines

To compare the child's performance with that of other children, use the stanines provided in this resource. Look up the total raw score obtained by the child and read his scaled score, a number between 1 and 9. This scaled score is called a stanine and it provides a guide to how well the child compares with a sample of children of the same grade. If the score on the table is allocated across more than one stanine group, choose the lowest value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

You will find a general discussion of achievement stanines in this resource, why they are used, when they are helpful and what their limitations are.

Interpreting *Lectura de palabras* scores

What the *Lectura de palabras* task does not do.

- It does not give a reading age.
- It does not sample a child's word reading if he is working beyond the level of early reading books.
- It does not discriminate so well between better readers after one year of instruction. On the contrary it groups them together.
- Differences of less than three score points are not sufficiently reliable to support any decisions about the child's progress, without other evidence.

Lista A	Lista B	Lista C
Palabra de práctica con	Palabra de práctica en	Palabra de práctica veo

yo

pero

son

aquí

abajo

mi

es

soy

donde

feliz

también

da

una

me

bonito

toma

casa

sí

gusta

de

mira

y

el

tiene

como

la

dijo

corre

por

voy

está

grande

puedo

no

alto

que

más

busca

del

un

hace

vamos

come

las

muy

jugar

tu

para

fue

tengo

cada

quiero

ella

al

todo

este

rojo

de

lee

se

RESULTADOS DE LA LECTURA DE PALABRAS

RESULTADO:

/20

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

GRUPO ESTANINA:

Observador: _____ Escuela: _____

Revisado 1/2025

Registre las respuestas incorrectas.

Escoge la lista apropiada.

✓ Respuesta correcta

● No respuesta

LISTA A	LISTA B	LISTA C
yo	mira	hace
pero	y	vamos
son	el	come
aquí	tiene	las
abajo	como	muy
mi	la	jugar
es	dijo	tu
soy	corre	para
donde	por	fue
feliz	voy	tengo
también	está	cada
da	grande	quiero
una	puedo	ella
me	no	al
bonito	alto	todo
toma	que	este
casa	más	rojo
sí	busca	de
gusta	del	lee
de	un	se

Chapter 10

Observation task for *Escritura de vocabulario*

ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO

The Cinderella of the literacy world is surely early writing. There are probably many reasons why it is neglected but the most obvious is a common belief that children must learn to read before they learn to spell and that they will learn to write after that.

Studies of preschool children have dispelled this illusion. Before three- and four-year-olds have even begun to wonder how the words of their favorite story can be “read” to them, they notice print in their environment, scribble and make letters on paper. They explore print before they explore the act of reading. Many interesting studies have reported what it is that children notice (Bissex, 1980; Chomsky, 1972; Dyson, 1997; Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Goodman, 1990; Kress, 2000).

Most children have a small repertoire of writing behavior when they start school. For about six months after entry to school the changes in writing behaviors of New Zealand five-year-olds are not spectacular. An early research study by Robinson (1973) captured a sudden increase in the pace of learning about writing in the second six months of literacy instruction. This trend, evident in the 2000 normative study (Clay, 2013), can also be seen in the 2018 study (Clay, 2019).

After about six months at school both boys and girls begin to make increasing gains in the number of words they can write correctly. In an instructional situation where children are invited to write daily and are helped by teachers to put their messages in print, in classrooms rich with opportunities to use both reading and writing, children are catching on to some of the features of words and messages written down.

By observing children as they write, we can learn a great deal about the features of print they are attending to. Their writing tells us what they know about letters and about the left-to-right sequencing behavior needed to read and write in Spanish. In order to write words, letter by letter, a child must recall not only the configuration but also the details of letter formation and letter order. Children’s written texts are a good source of information about their visual discrimination of print. Their hands and eyes support and supplement each other as they learn to write words and discover how to distinguish different letters one from another. This is a very large set of visual discrimination learning in any language.

Discuss the example of David's writing with a colleague. Does the child make some well-formed letters? How many letter forms can you recognize? Does he get the letters correctly sequenced? Specifically, what are the letters he knows? What is he confusing?

David
David
David
David

Reading seems to help writing and writing seems to help reading, especially in the first year of literacy instruction. They work together reciprocally, one boosting the other. How? We may never be able to explain how, in the brain, one activity boosts the effectiveness of another, but we can think about how good car drivers monitor the world through the windshield and take in information from the rear view and side mirrors, using several sets of information to take appropriate action. The ways in which children explore print as they write, and as they read, somehow seem to give the young learner a better overview of the complexity of language in print. Some detail that has caught the child's attention turns up again in a different kind of situation.

Beginning to write in school

Practice varies from one education system to another. Some prefer children to write on blank pages and teachers watch as children gradually bring directional behaviors under control. In other education systems teachers are firmly convinced that paper with horizontal lines helps children, making it easier to learn to work in an ordered way across a page. The requirement for the two writing tasks in the *Instrumento de observación* is a standard one. For these assessments one of the individual differences we need to learn about is what the child already does or does not know about putting print onto a page. Therefore, the standard situation is to use a blank page, which will reveal greater variance among the children about their control of writing; and that is precisely what we are trying to find out – who varies and in what way. What is done in a teaching situation remains a matter of teachers and systems to decide.

The developmental arguments for the “blank page” decision in the assessment situation are provided in Chapter 2.

Rating technique for early writing

Rating techniques can be used on children's early attempts to write stories. For example, to rate writing in the first year of school take three samples of the child's stories on consecutive days or over a couple of weeks. (One sample is not sufficiently reliable for this evaluation technique.) Rate them for language level, message quality and directional principles. Summarize the progress as satisfactory or unsatisfactory using the table below.

Language level

Record the number of the highest level of linguistic organization used by the child

- 1 alphabetical (letters only)
- 2 word (any recognizable word)
- 3 word group (any two-word phrase)
- 4 sentence (any simple sentence)
- 5 punctuated story (of two or more sentences)
- 6 paragraphed story (two themes).

Message quality

Record the number for the best description of the child's writing

- 1 a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation)
- 2 a concept that a message is conveyed
- 3 a message is copied
- 4 makes repetitive use of sentence patterns
- 5 attempts to record his own ideas
- 6 produces successful composition.

Directional principles

Record the number of the highest rating for which there is no error in the child's writing

- 1 no evidence of directional knowledge
- 2 part of the directional pattern is known: start top left, or move left to right, or return down left
- 3 reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and return down right)
- 4 correct directional pattern
- 5 correct directional pattern and spaces between words
- 6 extended text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of text.

	A Language level	B Message quality	C Directional principles
Not yet satisfactory	1-4	1-4	1-4
Probably satisfactory	5-6	5-6	5-6

One child's writing after two weeks in school:

s m o a s i

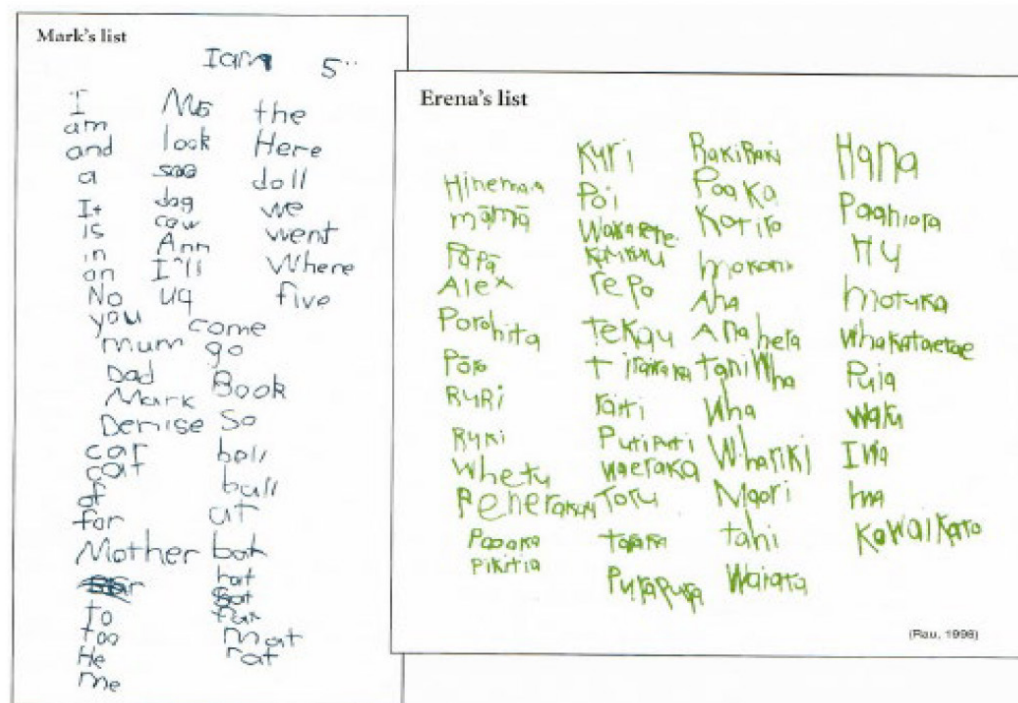
The same child's writing after 12 weeks:

El lobo feroz trajo una
galleta y se le quebró
la galleta.

ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO TASK

Marie Clay observed the writing of 100 children once every week in a research study. One thing she noticed was that the more competent children made lists of all the words they knew. These lists of words are interesting. Mark's list in English and Erena's list in Māori (Rau, 1998), written when they were 5 years and 11 months and 5 years 5 months respectively, were both produced spontaneously at home.

Examine Mark's list. Assuming that he was writing down the page, notice how a word he has just written seems to suggest another word he might write. Mark found words that started the same (It, is, in), that ended the same (at, bat, hat), that were opposites (come, go), that formed a category of family names (Mum, Dad, Mark, Denise), that were the same but different (car, cat, bell, ball) and so on.



From observations like these Robinson (1973) devised a useful observation task which has all the properties of a good test when it is used in the first two years of school. This writing vocabulary task is like a screen on which the child can project what he knows - not only what we have taught him but what he has learned anywhere in his various worlds. The child samples his own universe of knowledge. This is appropriate because when students are near the beginning of learning, in a new field, the kind of sampling of knowledge used in test construction does not work - what you are sampling is in very short supply. There is not enough common knowledge among beginners to use a sampling approach.

For Robinson's task the child was encouraged to write down all the words he knew how to write starting with his own name and making a personal list of words he had managed to learn. This simple assessment was reliable (that is, a child tended to score at a similar level when reassessed within two weeks) and had a strong relationship with reading words in isolation. Even before he begins formal literacy instruction a child can respond to the instruction "*Escribe todas las palabras que sabes.*" How children respond changes over time, and highly competent children can produce long lists of words even after a limited time at school.

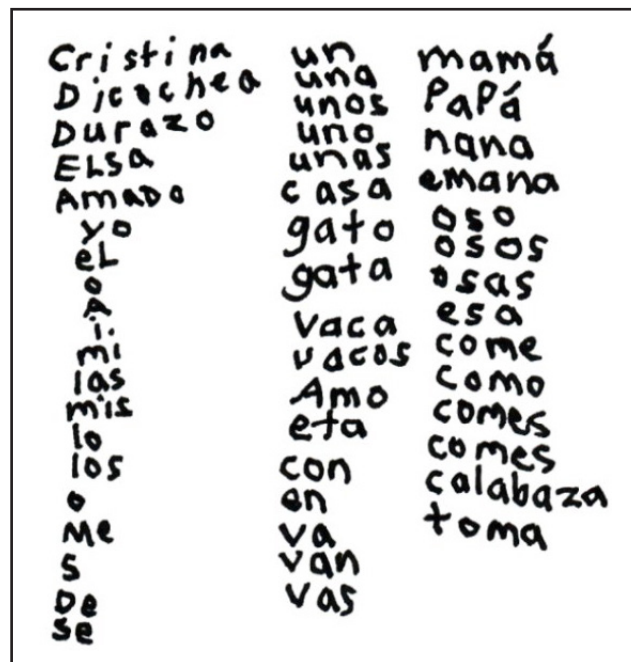
Robinson's procedure can be readily adapted to Spanish or any other language by simply modifying the instructions and prompts given to the child. This is an assessment that a teacher can do in any place at any time, needing nothing but their personal knowledge of how to make such observations and score them in systematic ways.

When the developers of the *Instrumento de observación* adapted the Clay and Robinson tasks into Spanish, they found that the task allowed teachers to observe children in the same way as in English. Additionally, the Spanish version demonstrated strong measurement qualities, showing high reliability. This reliability was confirmed by administering the task to 300 children, then retesting them a week later, with the children generally achieving similar scores on both occasions ($r = .95$ —fall 1991; $r = .87$ —spring 1992; see Escamilla, 1992).

A sample of a writing vocabulary task in Spanish is provided here. Note how this student's example demonstrates that these lists in Spanish are just as interesting and valuable as those created in English.

As we review Cristina's writing sample, we can assume she wrote down the page. Notice how, similar to English, one word she wrote seems to prompt another. Cristina turned singular words into plurals (e.g., *lo, los, mi, mis, oso, osos*); wrote words from Spanish word families (e.g., *un, una, unos, uno, unas*); and conjugated common verbs (e.g., *come, como, comes; va, van, vas*). She also listed animal names in both masculine and feminine forms (e.g., *gato, gata; osos, osas*); as well as family-related terms

Cristina's Sample



(e.g., *mamá, papá, nana*). Observations of 300 students' work on this task, along with validity and reliability studies, led the researchers to conclude that the writing vocabulary task in Spanish is a valuable tool for assessing a child's ability to recall and accurately record the configuration and details of words.

Although some children will write nothing or just the first letter of their name, other young children will write more than 30-35 words in Spanish in the 10 minutes allowed for this observation. This provides a score that correlates well with other literacy measures, changes over time, and has good measurement qualities. When the child can write more than 30-35 words the value of this score for predicting future changes in literacy learning diminishes. After that the teacher can begin to measure how the child works with a more traditional spelling or writing task.

So, like many observation tasks, this one is very useful for a short period of time (about one to two years), telling us how fast a child is building control over a basic writing vocabulary.

Once formal schooling begins, the distribution of scores on the observation task changes over time. This is demonstrated in the achievement stanine tables where the raw scores for a particular stanine, say 5, change markedly from fall to year-end.

Escritura de vocabulario scores are very sensitive to the instructional approaches used in classrooms. High scores might be associated with two quite different kinds of instruction, one which fosters early writing, and another which emphasizes word learning. Low scores are likely to occur where instruction provides few opportunities for children to write, but also where children are encouraged to write using only invented spellings.

In the first year of school there is probably a high degree of interdependence between reading words and writing words, but it should not be assumed that reading success in the first years of learning would be assured simply by teaching children to write words.

USING THE *ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO* OBSERVATION TASK

Administration

Invite the child to write all the words he knows. Allow ten minutes to complete this task. Give the child a pen and a copy of the observation sheet (provided in this resource) with the top folded under.

To introduce the task, say to the child

- **Quiero ver cuántas palabras puedes escribir.**
¿Puedes escribir tu nombre?

Start the 10-minute timing here.

If the child says “Sí,” say:

- **Escribe tu nombre.**

When the child finishes, say

- **Bien, ahora, piensa en todas las palabras que tú sabes escribir y escríbelas.**

When he stops writing, or seems uncertain, suggest words that he might know how to write, pausing between each word for the child's response.

- ¿Sabes cómo escribir ‘yo’ (pause), ‘a’ (pause)?
- ¿Sabes cómo escribir ‘la’ (pause), ‘mi’ (pause)?

If the child says “No,” say:

- **¿Sabes cómo escribir ‘yo’ (pause), ‘a’ (pause), ‘o’ (pause)?**
and then suggest other words that he may know (see below), pausing between each word for the child’s response.

Prompt to keep the child writing for as long as he can. Select words that he might have met in his reading books or might be able to write. Use some of the following words as a start. (This is not a list to be dictated or used for teaching.)

yo a es en soy para mamá gusta ve y papá gato sube mira de la me
casa amo oso se veo tu no los amigo da mis lo nos las sol sí con le
del vamos luna

Continue for 10 minutes or until the child's vocabulary is exhausted. Prompt the child with words he might be able to write but be careful not to interfere with his thinking and his searching of his own repertoire.

The child should not be asked to read the words he has written.

Very able children need little prompting. Sometimes it is necessary to suggest a category of words but do not prompt for words in a series. To focus children's attention on other words a good open-ended question is:

- **¿Sabes otras palabras como esa?**

To shift attention to other words and contexts a few of these questions might be used.

- **¿Sabes cómo escribir nombres de amigos?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir sobre cosas que haces?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir sobre las cosas de tu casa?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir sobre las cosas que comes?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir nombres de animales?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir nombres de colores?**
- **¿Sabes cómo escribir sobre...?**

Recording and scoring

1. Correct spelling. Each completed word scores one point if it is correctly spelled. Do not count the word as correct if:
 - the child accidentally writes a word that is correct but spontaneously tells you that it is another word. For example, he writes “*se*” and says without prompting that it is “*es*.”
 - the observer realizes from some other evidence that the child does not know what word he has written.
 - the tilde (~) in the letter ñ is omitted from a word containing that letter.
2. Accent marks. An accent mark does not affect the scoring when its inclusion or omission does not change the word's meaning.
 - Examples of correct responses because meaning is not altered:

<i>tambien</i>	<i>tia</i>	<i>zoologico</i>	<i>casá</i>
<i>también</i>	<i>tía</i>	<i>zoológico</i>	<i>casa</i>

In cases where the inclusion or omission of an accent mark does change the word's meaning, the written response is still accepted as correct unless a specific word has been prompted by the teacher or has been indicated by the child.

- Examples of correct responses:

T: (no prompt) C: writes *papa*

- Examples of incorrect responses:

T: "¿Sabes cómo escribir *está*?" C: writes *esta*

C: "Yo puedo escribir *mamá*." C: writes *mama*

3. Reversed letters and letter formation. The formation of individual letters (including the reversal of letters) does not influence the scoring except when the letter form represents a different letter. So, words with one or more reversed letters are correct when the intended letters are clear (for example "*lar*" for "*las*"). They are not correct if the reversed letter could be a different letter (for example, "*bel*" for "*del*," or reversed "*e*" looks like a "*g*" and they are not correct if the intended letters are not clear (e.g. "*con*" looks like "*coh*").

4. Words written right to left. These are scored as correct only if the child actually wrote the letters from right to left. Individual letters may or may not be reversed which means that words scored as correct may have a mixture of reversed and correctly oriented letters.

<i>noc</i>	<i>noc</i>	<i>con</i>	<i>noc</i>
←	←	←	→
<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>no</i>

5. Series of words. Teachers should not prompt for words in a series, or in a rhyming set or a spelling pattern group like "*me*" "*te*" "*se*" "*le*." However, when children spontaneously produce a series of words like "*hace*" "*haces*" "*hacemos*" or "*casa*" "*pasa*" "*masa*" each word is counted.

6. Capital letters. Capital letters are acceptable substitutions for lower case letters and vice versa.

7. English words. English and translanguaging responses are acceptable when written correctly and meet all the scoring criteria mentioned above. A translanguaging response occurs when

- the child is prompted in Spanish but writes the word in English
- the child writes in Spanish but spontaneously reads the word in English
- the child writes in English but spontaneously reads the word in Spanish.

Achievement stanines

To compare the child's performance with that of other children, use the stanines provided in this resource. Look up the total raw score obtained by the child and read his scaled score, a number between 1 and 9. This scaled score is called a stanine and it provides a guide to how well the child compares with a sample of children of the same grade. If the score on the table is allocated across more than one stanine group, choose the lowest value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

You will find a general discussion of achievement stanines in this resource, why they are used, when they are helpful and what their limitations are.

Interpreting *Escritura de vocabulario* scores

A poor writing vocabulary may indicate that, despite his efforts to read, a child is in fact taking very little notice of the visual features of print. He requires an all-out teaching effort and a great deal of help to elicit early writing behaviors. In this learning the hand and eye support and supplement each other. Only later does the eye become the sole agent and reading becomes faster than in the eye-plus-hand learning phase (Clay, 2015a).

Many kinds of experiences in school and out of school, with letters, numbers, words, stories, drawing and life in the real world, have enabled the child to learn many things about print such as where it is used and what kinds of things it can tell us. Despite a high degree of interdependence between reading words and writing words, they are not necessarily linked up for the child. Research that has looked closely at words children can spell which they cannot read has found that some children cannot read words that they can write, and vice versa. Instructional programs vary in the extent to which they allow or foster this reciprocity between writing and reading.

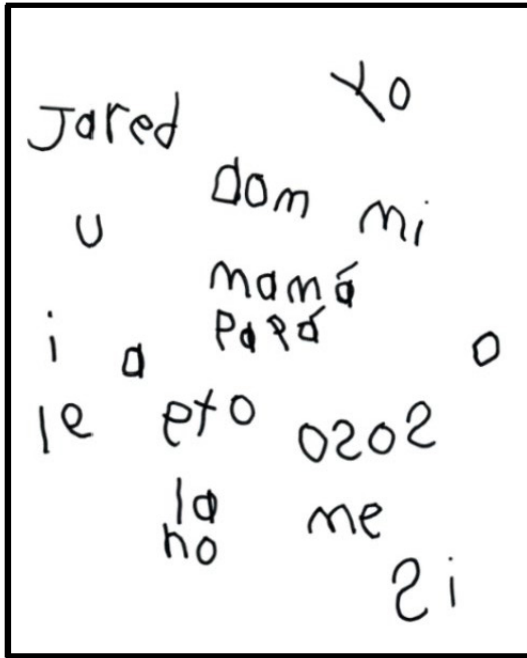
Keeping records of writing progress

A record of a child's progress may be kept in one of the following ways.

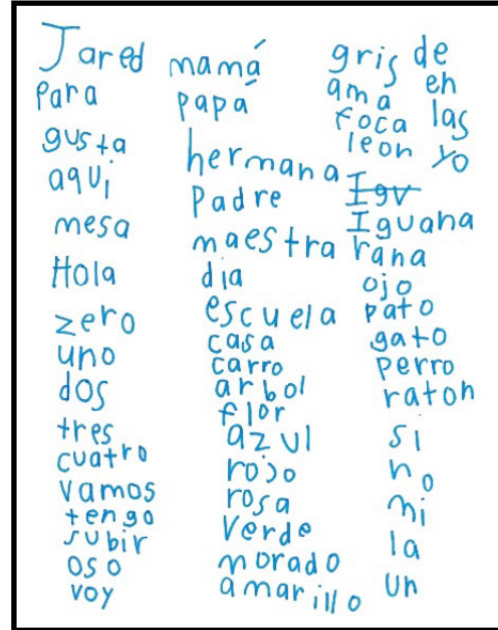
An inventory of writing vocabulary

If the writing observation is done at several points of time – at entry to school, after six months and after one year – this provides one type of record of change over time in early writing. In this example, the progress Jared is making in building a writing vocabulary is clear from the record sheet without any reference to scores or stanines.

Jared: Beginning of year



Jared: End of year



Record change over time in daily or weekly writing

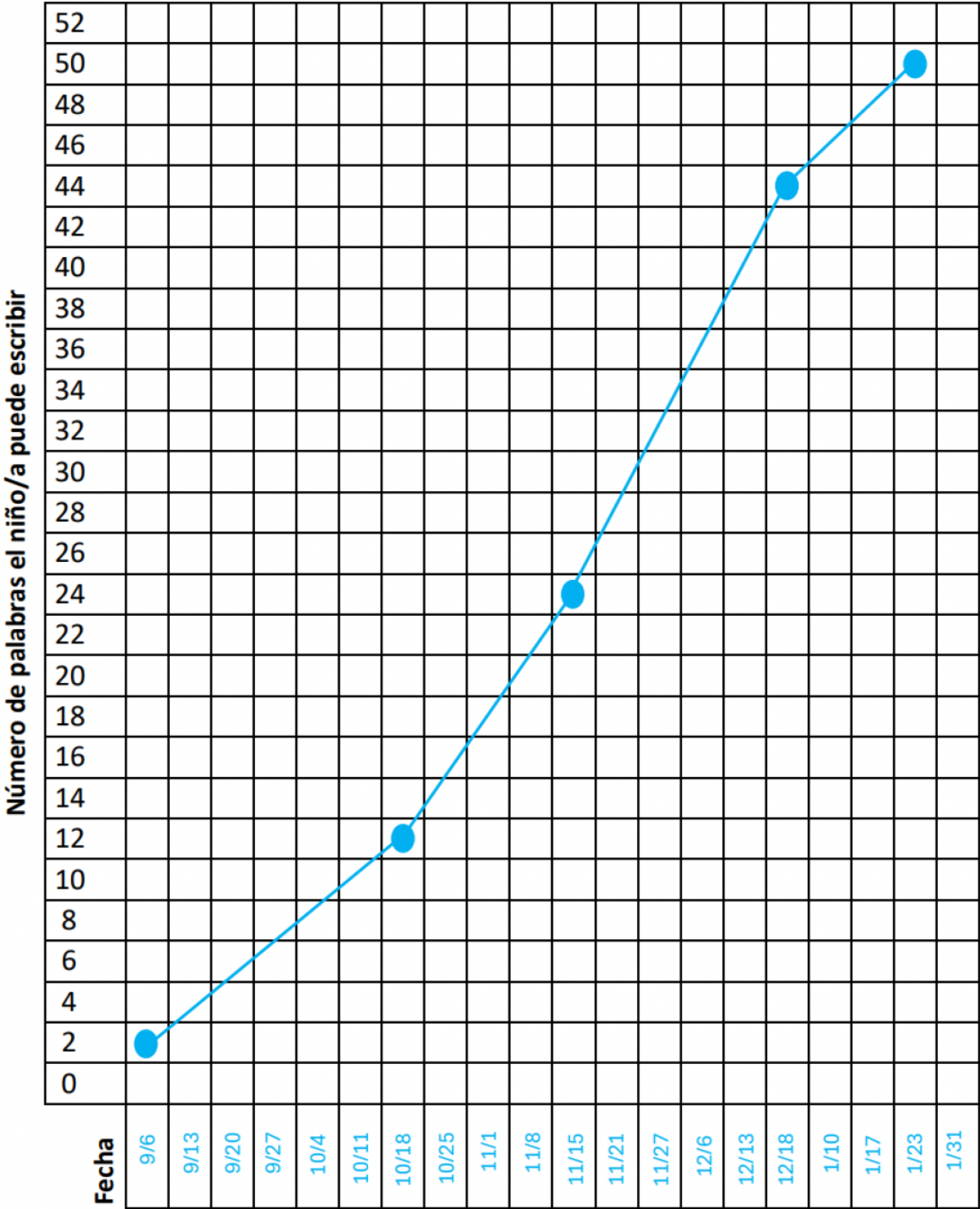
A teacher can keep a list of new words written independently by certain students to whom she is currently paying particular attention (see the *Registro semanal de la escritura de vocabulario*).

An accumulated *Escritura de vocabulario* chart

The teacher could make a graph of the accumulated totals on the weekly record sheet. To start the record, enter the number of words written correctly on the initial *Escritura de vocabulario* observation task. Then from Week 1 add, cumulatively, the number of new words the child writes independently in the stories he is writing in the classroom or literacy intervention. A cumulative record of writing vocabulary is a sensitive reflection of the child's increasing control over writing, and it is a reliable indicator of slow progress. In addition, a teacher might plot the results of several successive *Escritura de vocabulario* tasks.

ESCRITURA ACUMULADA DE VOCABULARIO

Nombre: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____



Fechas de observaciones

Change in writing continuous text

It is surprisingly difficult to take observational records of a young child writing with the teacher's assistance. In a classroom the teacher is either interacting with the child or allowing the child to interact with informed others who help the child as he writes. In several studies researchers have tried to devise ways of recording what occurs in such observations, but it turns out to be much more difficult than taking observational records of reading.

In order to capture children's behavior while writing in their classrooms during the first four years of school a running record of writing behavior was developed (Boocock, 1991). Each child's stream of behavior during five minutes of his or her writing time was recorded or coded as it occurred onto a complete grid of predefined categories to capture oral, written and other behaviors. Experienced observers of reading behavior found it challenging to record all the writing behaviors. Most difficult to capture were the oral responses of the children before, during and after the observation (Boocock et al., 1998).

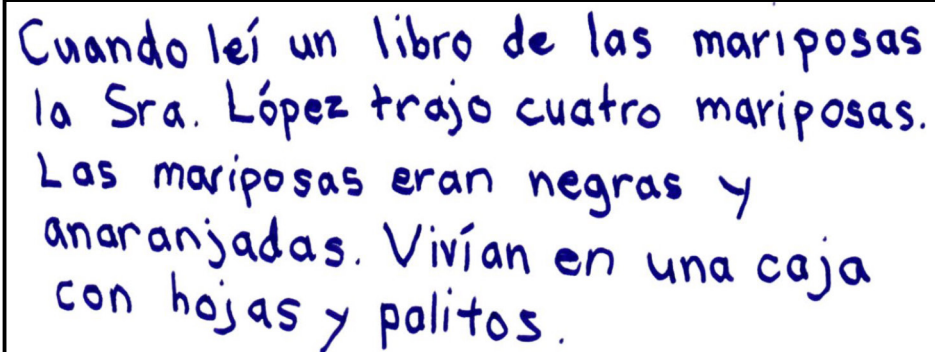
In a report which appeared in *The Reading Teacher* there is a record which traces a child's progress in the first 10 weeks of school. (The record has to be simplified leaving out many things that the observer saw.) In that record it is possible to show the child becoming a more independent writer in just a few weeks. It is also an interesting account of what the teacher was trying to achieve as she worked alongside the child (Girling-Butcher et al., 1991).

Those who wish to take observation records of children writing in authentic situations in interaction with teachers, children or other helpers should be warned to be ready for complicated sequences of behavior.

As children become more proficient, teachers can monitor progress by observing independent writing of continuous text. A child who can write 50 or more words is too competent a writer for the *Escritura de vocabulario* task to be a satisfactory assessment of progress. Starting with the simple technique for evaluating early writing that was previously described, observant teachers will develop more complex criteria for rating the quality of children's writing.

Children should be encouraged, at regular intervals, to write a story of several sentences or paragraphs with as little help as possible. To assess change over time an earlier record for one child can be compared with a later one and the progress made should be clearly articulated.

Example of child's story writing



Cuando leí un libro de las mariposas
la Sra. López trajo cuatro mariposas.
Las mariposas eran negras y
anaranjadas. Vivían en una caja
con hojas y palitos.

Assessing older children's spelling

Older children can be given a spelling test which usually yields some kind of standard test score. Spelling tests are sometimes constructed with particular sets of words – regular words, irregular words, spelling “demons,” foreign words, words from different language roots (e.g., *kiosko*), and so on. These constraints should be taken into account when interpreting the child's behavior. His responses when asked to spell a constrained set of words should not be generalized to his writing of words outside the set of words used in the observation task.

Another way to assess spelling is to ask children to proofread their own writing, that is to find the spelling mistakes they have made.

Spelling observations provide useful information that comes from watching a child at work and noting strengths such as the speed of writing known words, effective ways of getting to new words, and analogies that are tried. After a child has reached the upper threshold of his spelling achievement (where mostly correct spelling passes over to frequent incorrect spelling), the incorrect responses provide evidence of risk-taking, analysis of sound sequences, control of spelling patterns, use of analogy, rule-guided behavior and also gaps, confusions and unproductive actions.

**ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO
HOJA DE OBSERVACIÓN**

Fecha: _____

Nombre: _____ Edad: _____

RESULTADO:

Observador: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____

GRUPO ESTANINA:

(Doble el encabezado hacia atrás antes de que el niño/la niña use la hoja)

Revisado 1/2025

COMENTARIOS:

REGISTRO SEMANAL DE LA ESCRITURA DE VOCABULARIO

Nombre: _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Revisado 1/2026

Evaluación Inicial: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:	Semana: Fecha:
Semana: Fecha:						

ESCRITURA ACUMULADA DE VOCABULARIO

Nombre: _____ **Fecha de nacimiento:** _____

[illegible]

Fechas de observaciones

Primer registro:

Fecha:

Último registro:

Fecha:

Chapter II

Observation task for *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras*

OÍR Y ANOTAR SONIDOS EN PALABRAS

Hearing and recording sounds in words is a useful observation task to capture the child's control of sound-to-letter links. Being able to hear the sounds in the words you want to write is an authentic task – a task one encounters in the real world rather than one devised merely for the purpose of assessing. It calls upon the writer to listen to the sequence of sounds in words and to find letters to represent those sounds.

This observation task has directed the attention of teachers and children to phonemic awareness since its development in 1977, and it fits very well with the more recent emphasis in the research literature on phonemic awareness. It arose not from the experimental studies of the 1980s but from the descriptive studies of the 1970s (Chomsky, 1972; Clay, 1979b; Elkonin, 1973; Read, 1975).

School entrants can speak a language. Now they need to work out how their spoken language relates to messages in print and how the language knowledge they already have can help them to read and write messages. One of the things they already know is how to use most of the sounds of their language.

Recent research has made it clear that we must pay attention to four aspects of how the sounds of English are represented in print. Children have to learn to:

- hear the sounds buried within words, and this is not an easy task
- visually discriminate the symbols we use in print, and this is a large set of symbols
- link single symbols and clusters of symbols with the sounds they represent

and that there are many alternatives and exceptions in our system of putting sounds into print.

The aspects mentioned above regarding how English sounds are represented in writing are equally crucial for learning to read and write in Spanish. Additionally, these four concepts illustrate universal principles of phoneme-grapheme relationships that can help readers transition from one language to another while developing their reading and writing skills.

Long before they have learned all there is to know about letters and sounds, children begin to work on relationships among a few things which they have learned. You do not have to know all the members of a set before you can work out some of the set's

characteristics. Also, while some teachers are painstakingly teaching one letter-sound link after another in reading or writing, some children have already begun to read or write using bigger chunks of information.

- It is more efficient to work with larger chunks, and so they do!
- Sometimes it is more efficient to work with relationships (“this is like a word I know”) rather than items of knowledge, like sounds and letters, and so they do!
- Often it is efficient to use a vague sense of a rule, and so they do!

They do not wait for the teacher to get through all her lessons on sounds before they begin working with larger chunks and relationships. Research on teaching reading and writing in Spanish has shown that a similar form of “information chunking” takes place as students learn to read and write in Spanish.

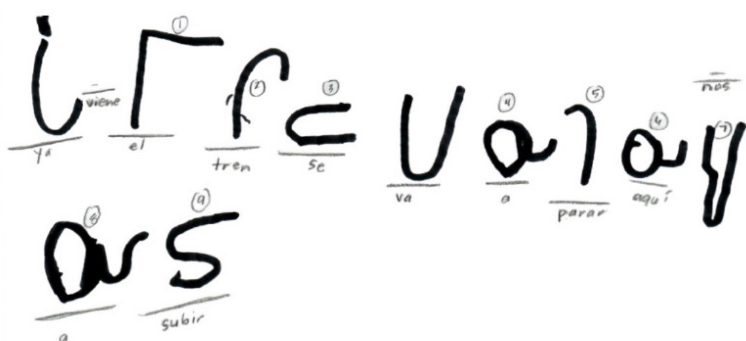
USING THE OÍR Y ANOTAR SONIDOS EN PALABRAS OBSERVATION TASK

At first this observation task was called dictation because the teacher asks the child to record a dictated sentence. But the child’s product is scored by counting his representation of the sounds (phonemes) by letters (graphemes) rather than the accurate spelling of words. The teacher reads the sentences the child is going to write. Then he is encouraged to write what he can hear as the individual words are dictated. What he does not hear will not get recorded. Scores show how successful the child was at hearing the sounds in the words and finding a possible way of recording those sounds in Spanish spelling. (The task is not a pure assessment of phonemic awareness because what the child has learned about spelling, or orthography, may also turn up in his recording.)

The child is given credit for every sound that he writes correctly, even though the whole word may not be correctly spelled. The scores give some indication of the child’s ability to 1) analyze the word he hears or says and 2) to find a way of recording in letters the sounds he can hear. The children’s scores change over time from low to high as they become more competent at this kind of task.

Two early attempts at *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras*

Ya viene el tren. Se va a parar aquí. Nos vamos a subir.



Administration

Select one of the four forms A-D below. To avoid a practice effect, use one form for an initial assessment and a different form for a subsequent reassessment.

Forma A: Tengo un perro en la casa. Lo llevo al parque conmigo.

Forma B: Papá está en casa. Dice que vamos a jugar a la pelota.

Forma C: Yo tengo una gata café. Le gusta dormir en mi cama.

Forma D: Ya viene el tren. Se va a parar aquí. Nos vamos a subir.

Give the child a pen and a copy of the observation sheet included in this resource with the top folded under.

To introduce the task, say to the child:

- **Te voy a leer un cuento. Cuando termine de leerlo una vez, volveré a leerlo otra vez muy despacio para que tú puedas escribir las palabras del cuento.**

Read the sentences to the child at normal speed. Then say:

- **Algunas de las palabras son difíciles. Diles despacito a ti mismo/a y piensa de cómo las podrías escribir.**
- **Ahora, empieza a escribir las palabras.**

Dictate slowly, word by word. When the child comes to a problem word, say:

- **Di la palabra despacito. ¿Cómo empezarías a escribirlo?**
- **¿Qué puedes oír?**

Then add:

- **¿Qué más puedes oír?**

If the child cannot complete the word, say:

- **Vamos a dejar de escribir esta palabra. La siguiente palabra es...**

Point out where to write the next word if this helps the child.

Support the child with comments like those above to keep the child working at the task.

Recording and Scoring

As the child writes, keep a record (on a separate piece of paper) of any attempts that may be hard to interpret. After the task is finished, write the correct text below the child's version.

<u>dise</u>	<u>biene</u>	<u>parce</u>	<u>trn</u>	<u>t</u>
dice	viene	parque	tren	tengo

Rules for scoring are necessary to ensure reliability and validity when the task is used for measurement of progress or change. Using the scoring standards included in this resource for the form you selected, and the Conventions for scoring that follow, score one point for each numbered phoneme the child has analyzed and recorded, and record the total out of 39.

There can be no set of rules for scoring that will cover the ingenuity found in children's attempts. Observers are advised to be conservative rather than liberal in applying the scoring conventions noted in this resource if comparable results are to be achieved across different observers. Recorders do not agree on how to score partially correct responding and so, for a reliable measuring instrument, only the correct criteria for scoring can be recommended.

Substitutions

Given what is being observed in this task, it makes sense to accept a response when the sound analysis is a useful one in the sense that the letters the child has written can be used to record that sound even though the spelling, in this case, is incorrect.

As a general principle, substituted letters are accepted if, in Spanish, the sound is sometimes recorded in that way. And if those letters are never used to make the sounds being recorded, the substitutions count as errors.

Examples of substitutions counted as correct:

c fuerte, q, k

<u>parcel/parke/parqe</u>	<u>kasa</u>
parque	casa

r, rr

<u>dorrmir</u>	<u>subirr</u>	<u>pero</u>
dormir	subir	perro

b, v

<u>biene</u>	<u>bamos</u>	<u>suvir</u>
viene	vamos	subir

ll, y, i

<u>yevolievo</u>	<u>llo/io</u>
llevo	yo

s, c suave, z

<u>caza</u>	<u>ce</u>	<u>dise</u>
casa	se	dice

g, j

<u>gugar</u>
jugar

In Spanish, as in other languages, there are many dialectical differences. Notice whether the child's pronunciation aligns with their spelling. Omitted or altered sounds are still considered incorrect, even if the spelling reflects the child's pronunciation (e.g. *vamo/ vamos*, *dormil/dormir*). However, it's important to recognize and note these behaviors.

Conventions for scoring

1. Using the scoring standards provided in this resource, score one point for each phoneme that the child has analyzed and recorded that is numbered 1-39 for the form used.
2. If a letter does not have a numeral underneath it, then that letter receives no score.
3. There is no score for a word when it is repeated in the same passage (*Forma B* and *Forma D*: the word "a").
4. Where two letters are underlined, those two letters must both be used in order to receive a score (*Forma A*: llevo).

5. Additions do not affect the scoring (only numbered phonemes are scored).

<u>jugaru</u> (5)	<u>peloata</u> (6)	<u>están</u> (4)	<u>una</u> (2)
jugar	pelota	está	un

6. Capital letters are acceptable substitutions for lower case letters and vice versa.

<u>EL</u> (2)	<u>tReN</u> (4)	<u>yO</u> (2)
el	tren	Yo

7. Reversed letters are not correct if they could represent a different letter.

<u>qerro</u> (3)	<u>bormir</u> (5)
perro	dormir

8. Where a child has made a change in the order of scored letters in a word, subtract one from the total score for that word.

<u>es</u> (2-1= 1)	<u>vamsa</u> (5-1= 4)	<u>ymasa</u> (5-1= 4)
se	vamos	vamos

Completing the record sheet

The teacher who is a sensitive observer will have noted partially correct responses which will tell her a great deal about the cutting edge of the child's knowledge of sounds, letters and words. Such qualitative information is very important for planning the kind of help to offer the child.

It is important for the observer to make notes on

- any sequencing errors
- the omission of sounds
- unusual placement of letters within words
- partially correct attempts, and
- ‘good’ confusions.

Any of these may tell the teacher something about what the learner knows and how the teacher may support some shift in performance.

To complete the *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras hoja de observación* included in this resource, score the child’s record using the conventions for scoring noted above and calculate the total score. Make a note of your most useful observations in the *Comentarios* section at the bottom of the sheet. Consult the stanine table for the appropriate stanine.

Achievement stanines

To compare the child’s performance with that of other children, use the stanines provided in this resource. Look up the total raw score obtained by the child and read his scaled score, a number between 1 and 9. This scaled score is called a stanine and it provides a guide to how well the child compares with a sample of children of the same grade. If the score on the table is allocated across more than one stanine group, choose the lowest value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

You will find a general discussion of achievement stanines in this resource, why they are used, when they are helpful and what their limitations are.

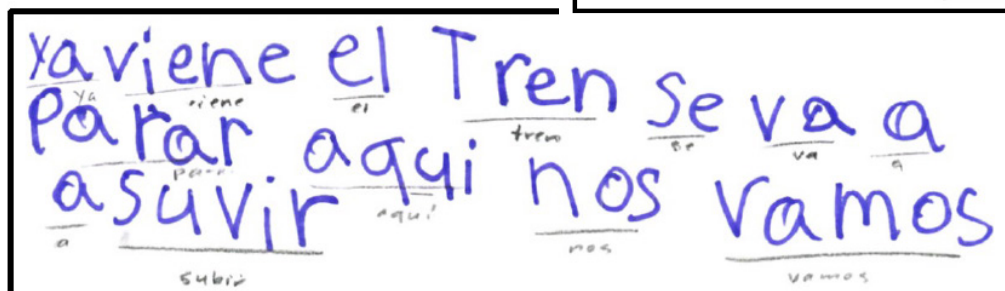
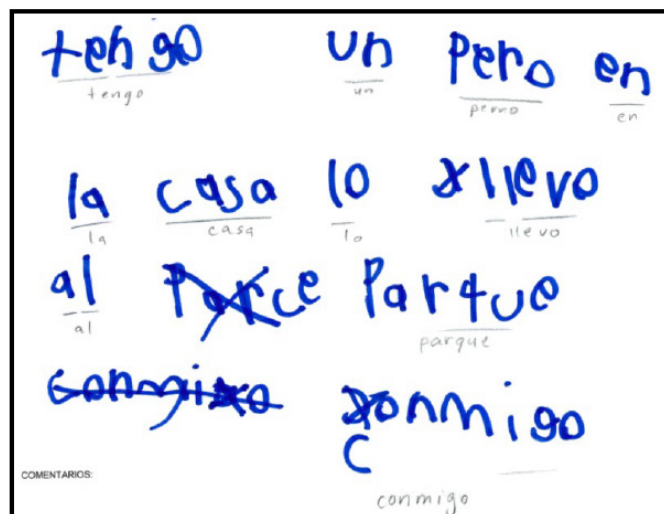
INTERPRETING THE OÍR Y ANOTAR SONIDOS EN PALABRAS OBSERVATION TASK

Observing change over time

This task has proved to be a valuable indicator of change over time in a child’s ability to go from an analysis of sounds in spoken words to written forms for representing these sounds. In that sense this is neither a dictation nor a spelling test.

While initially the child’s progress will be in the area of hearing and recording the sounds in words, as he moves towards more control over writing we must expect him to be learning something about the orthography, that is, the spelling rules and patterns, of the language.

In the two examples here, both children are good at hearing and recording the sounds in words. Each child can write a number of high frequency words correctly and use some common spelling conventions.



Resultados de Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras

Select one of the following alternative forms: A, B, C or D.

Forma A	Tengo un perro en la casa. Lo llevo al parque conmigo.
Forma B	Papá está en casa. Dice que vamos a jugar a la pelota.
Forma C	Yo tengo una gata café. Le gusta dormir en mi cama.
Forma D	Ya viene el tren. Se va a parar aquí. Nos vamos a subir.

OÍR Y ANOTAR SONIDOS EN PALABRAS
HOJA DE OBSERVACIÓN

Fecha: _____

Nombre: _____ Edad: _____

RESULTADO:

/39

Observador: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____

GRUPO ESTANINA:

--

(Doble el encabezado hacia atrás antes de que el niño/la niña use la hoja)

Revisado 1/2025

COMENTARIOS:

Chapter 12

Summarizing the *Instrumento de observación* results

CHANGE OVER TIME IN EARLY LITERACY LEARNING

The *Instrumento de observación* provides detailed information on what children have learned about the complex relationships between spoken and written language. Completing a summary of the results enables the teacher to bring together and integrate what she has observed.

Before describing useful ways to integrate these results some discussion of the use of achievement stanines is necessary.

Achievement stanines are scores which redistribute raw scores according to a normal curve in nine groups from 1, a low score, to 9, a high score (Lyman, 1998). They are normalized standard scores. When you place a child in a stanine group you have placed the child in a “temporary progress category.” You should not try to do arithmetic with these categories. The *Instrumento de observación* achievement stanines should not be summed or averaged, for example, when making instructional decisions.

The temporary progress categories formed by each range of achievement stanines suggest that the child in the

- 5-6 range should be able to participate in the average classroom activities
- 7-9 range is probably eager to reach out to more complex or challenging tasks
- 3-4 range is already struggling with average tasks in the class and needs extra teacher attention if this situation is to be changed
- 1-2 range is unlikely to be able to catch up without immediate, intensive, expert teaching.

Achievement stanines are also useful for quite a different reason. It makes no sense to compare the raw scores of a child across the survey tasks because each task has a different total score. Stanines can be used to compare a student’s scores across several quite different types of observations, because all the scores are placed on the same measuring scale, from 1 to 9. Knowing the highs and lows of a student’s performance profile can help with the planning of instruction.

Where a raw score value on the table is allocated across more than one stanine, choose the lowest stanine value; that is, be conservative rather than generous.

Where a stanine score on the table is allocated across more than one raw score value, again

be conservative rather than generous in your appraisal. Think of the child whose raw score is at the lower end of the range as just getting into that stanine group.

On these tasks most children move from low scores on entry to school to high scores after one or two years at school, and it is desirable for all children to get close to perfect scores for the letters of the alphabet, the sound-letter relationships task (*OASP*), and the short word reading task designed for early readers.

When we are assessing something in which we expect children to eventually reach perfect scoring (as in *Identificación de letras*, *OASP*, *Conceptos del texto impreso*) we must expect older children to begin to cluster on the high scores. For teaching purposes, the raw scores will then be more informative, for the questions by that time are “How close is the child to knowing all the letters (perfect scoring)?” and “Which few letters, words or concepts must we work on?”

When a child is reassessed, it is likely that a different age table will be used because the child is older. We are still comparing the child with his peers of the same age. On this second assessment the child’s stanine category may be higher, the same, or lower. If it is the same he is maintaining his position relative to his age peers. If it is higher, the child is gaining on his peers and closing any previous gap. If it is lower, his peers are pushing ahead at a faster rate than this child is learning.

There may be a good reason for a school, a district, or a particular community group to build up its own table of achievement stanines. Teachers could accumulate data over several years against which to compare individual children, or each year’s intake of children, on this aspect of literacy learning. A professional with expertise in tests and measurement could assist with this.

Teachers find achievement stanines within a limited age range useful when they need to evaluate individual children for instruction or placement.

MAKING A SUMMARY OF THE *INSTRUMENTO DE OBSERVACIÓN* RESULTS

The *Instrumento de observación* tasks provide a teacher with detailed information about the reading and writing behaviors of children. There is a range of ways she could summarize the information and use it to guide her instruction. Different approaches will be needed for different children. The teacher might, for example,

- make notes on teaching points for competent children
- make a brief analysis of the behaviors observed to guide instruction
- produce detailed write-ups for children whose progress really puzzles them.

For children finding literacy learning troublesome, making a detailed integrative summary of the six tasks allows teachers to describe what the child can do, and also what is partially known, at the boundaries of the child's knowledge.

Levels of language

There is a number of reasons for the detailed approach to summarizing and integrating the results of the *Instrumento de observación* outlined here. A language is organized hierarchically on several levels. We can think about the *Instrumento de observación* as providing specific information about children's literacy responses at the level of text (a general term standing for phrase, sentence or larger text), at the word level, and at the letter level.

Although the reader appears to have stored many items of knowledge in memory he has also learned ways of working with the information in print – ways of finding it, storing it, filing it, retrieving it, and linking or cross-referencing one kind of information with another kind (Clay, 2015a, 2015b).

Good observation, rather than modern linguistic theory, led talented reading clinician Grace Fernald to formulate these two statements about the relationships of letters, words and texts in 1943.

- Groups of words must be the focus of attention in reading. Attention to the words as separate units, as in word-by-word reading, loses important meanings. The meaning of a word can vary with the group in which it occurs or, to put this in another way, a group of words has a certain meaning. The sentence is the context within which the meaning of the word group is confirmed. The known word is the unit at which level the precision of the word group is usually confirmed.
- For the unknown, unfamiliar, forgotten or misperceived word, the reader's attention must go to clusters of letters, or even to individual letters, but whether these are right or not must be confirmed at the level of the word unit.

Fernald insisted therefore that, in writing, the word should always be written as a unit, and in reading, words should always be used in context.

Writing the *Resumen del instrumento de observación*

There are two main elements to writing a *Resumen del instrumento de observación*:

1. Transferring and summarizing the detail from the individual tasks onto a single sheet under a list of headings.
2. Examining what children are able to do with the knowledge they have, that is, their processing.

These two elements correspond to Side 1 and Side 2 of the *Resumen del instrumento de observación* (see examples in this chapter).

Side 1: *Lectura actual del texto* and other observation tasks

Onto the top of Side 1 of the *Resumen del instrumento de observación*, transfer

- detail from the *Registros progresivos* obtained at three levels
- the analysis of the kinds of information the child was using and neglecting to use, and
- statements about how the reading sounded.

On the lower half of Side 1, record the results for the other observation tasks.

Side 2: Thinking about strategic activity or processing

On Side 2 of the *Resumen del instrumento de observación*, make an analysis of the ways in which the child identifies and solves problems or new challenges. Complete each section under useful and problem strategic activity a) on text, b) with words, and c) with letters. Use the questions on the following pages to help you.

Make a note of any unusual behaviors.

Some examples of what is meant by strategic activity are given in the completed record for Alfonso (see Alfonso's *Resumen* in this chapter).

Comments should be made on the child's performance in relation to each of the following six topics.

- Useful strategic activity on text reading.
- Problem strategic activity on text reading.
- Useful strategic activity with words.
- Problem strategic activity with words.
- Useful strategic activity with letters and sounds, separately and in clusters.
- Problem strategic activity with letters and sounds, separately and in clusters.

RESUMEN DEL INSTRUMENTO DE OBSERVACIÓN

Nombre: _____

Fecha: _____ F. de N.: _____

Edad: __ Años __ Meses

Escuela: _____

Observador: _____

Títulos del texto

Fácil _____

Instructivo _____

Difícil _____

Errores
Palabras actuales

Proporción
de error

1: _____

1: _____

1: _____

Exactitud

_____ %

_____ %

_____ %

Proporción de
autocorrección

1: _____

1: _____

1: _____

Movimiento direccional _____

Análisis de errores y autocorrecciones

Información utilizada o descuidada [Significado (S), Estructura o Sintaxis (E), Visual (V)]

Fácil _____

Instructivo _____

Difícil _____

Cotejo de la información (Observe que este comportamiento cambia con el tiempo)

Como se oye el niño/la niña mientras lee	Fácil Instructivo Difícil								
Identificación de letras	<table><tr><td>Puntaje</td><td>Estanina</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Puntaje	Estanina						
Puntaje	Estanina								
Conceptos del texto impreso	<table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>								
Lectura de palabras	<table><tr><td>☐ Lista A</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ Lista B</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ Lista C</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ Otra _____</td><td></td></tr></table>	☐ Lista A		☐ Lista B		☐ Lista C		☐ Otra _____	
☐ Lista A									
☐ Lista B									
☐ Lista C									
☐ Otra _____									
Escritura de vocabulario	<table><tr><td></td><td></td></tr></table>								
Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras	<table><tr><td>☐ A</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ B</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ C</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>☐ D</td><td></td></tr></table>	☐ A		☐ B		☐ C		☐ D	
☐ A									
☐ B									
☐ C									
☐ D									
Otras tareas	Muestra de escritura Cuento								

Revisado 1/2025

RESUMEN DEL INSTRUMENTO DE OBSERVACIÓN

Nombre: Alfonso

Fecha: 9/7/19

F. de N.: 3/9/25

Edad: 6 Años

6 Meses

Escuela: Franklin

Observador: Marisa

Títulos del Texto

		Errores Palabras Actuales	Proporción de Error	Exactitud	Proporción de Autocorrección
Fácil	<u>Soy un tigre (RR)-2</u>	<u>1/21</u>	1: <u>21</u>	<u>95</u> %	1: <u>0</u>
Instructivo	<u>Mira a Danny (MRB)-3</u>	<u>3/39</u>	1: <u>13</u>	<u>92</u> %	1: <u>0</u>
Difícil	<u>Mi paseo (PVEP)-4</u>	<u>8/48</u>	1: <u>6</u>	<u>83</u> %	1: <u>0</u>

Movimiento Direccional Parece controlar movimiento direccional

Análisis de Errores y Autocorrecciones

Información utilizada o descuidada [Significado (S), Estructura o Sintaxis (E), Visual (V)]

Fácil Parece integrar S, E y V. Error indica el uso de información visual.

Instructivo Parece integrar todas las fuentes de información, descuidando la info. visual al final de la palabra.

Difícil Parece integrar todas las fuentes de información, descuidando la info. visual al final de la palabra.

Resumen de la información (Observe que este comportamiento cambia con el tiempo)

Como se oye el niño/la niña mientras lee	Fácil	Leyó a buen paso con entonación y rapidez.		
	Instructivo	Leyó a buen paso, frases de 2-3 palabras, entonación apropiada.		
	Difícil	Leyó con expresión buena, frases de 2-3 palabras, a buen paso.		
Identificación de Letras	Nombró la mayoría por nombre. Confunde algunas grafías visual o auditivamente similares: L/Ll; s-c/z; q/p; d/b; r/rr. Identificó las letras como 'palabras.'			
				Puntaje 56 Estanina 5
Conceptos del texto impreso	Sabe que el texto lleva el mensaje y parece controlar el movimiento direccional. Notó cambio en la secuencia/orden de las letras en una palabra, e identificó letras, palabras y conceptos de principio y fin apropiadamente. Conoce el uso del punto, la raya y el símbolo de interrogación.			19 8
Prueba de Palabras	☒ Lista A	Leyó 19 palabras con fluidez - en una ocasión se adelantó al	19	6
	☐ Lista B	paso de la maestra.		
	☐ Lista C	Aproximación: bo-bonita/bonito		
	☐ Otra			
Escritura de Vocabulario	Escribió catorce palabras. Otros intentos no cuentan debido a la formación de la letra 'a' y 'n,' ya que invertidas (d/a), o con rasgos similares (h/n) pueden representar otra letra (OS p. 108.)			14 5
Oír y Registrar Sonidos en Palabras	☒ A	Escuchó y anotó 28 sonidos correctamente. Separó una palabra en	28	4
	☐ B	sílabas y autocorrigió dos: Tego/tengo No/lo. Igual que arriba,		
	☐ C	algunos sonidos no cuentan debido a letras invertidas o similares		
	☐ D	que pueden representar otras letras (OS p. 122).		
Otras Tareas	Muestra de Escritura			
	Cuento			
	Ortografía			

Revisado 1/2025

Note: Stanines reflect the year the assessment was administered (2019).

ANÁLISIS DEL PROCESO DEL ESTUDIANTE

Estrategias útiles en texto:

Estrategias problemáticas en texto:

Estrategias útiles con palabras:

Estrategias problemáticas con palabras:

Estrategias útiles con letras:

Estrategias problemáticas con letras:

Resumen:

Firma _____

Useful strategic activity (processing) on text

Review the *Registros progresivos* where the child is performing adequately (90 to 100 percent accuracy) and look for some evidence of how effectively he works with the various kinds of information he can find in the print. Also look at the *Conceptos del texto impreso* items. Use the following questions selectively (depending on the child's level) as a guide to your analysis of the records.

Foundational learning

- Does he control directional movement?
 - Left to right?
 - Top to bottom?
 - Return sweep?
- Does he locate particular information in print? What kind of information?
- Does he read word by word? If so, is this a new achievement (he is now trying to pull some things together) or an old habit, or is he reverting to an early behavior because something is difficult for him?

Language

- Does he control oral language well?
- Does he read for meaning?
- Does he control book language?
- Does he have a good memory for text?
- Does he read for the precise message?

Substitutions

- Do the error substitutions the child uses make sense with the previous text? (*Sentido/Significado*)
- Do they continue an acceptable sentence in Spanish? Could they occur in grammar for that sentence, up to that word? (*Estructura*)
- What use is the reader making of visual or print information? (Do some of the letters in the error match with the letters in the text?)

Cross-checking on information

At an early stage of text reading these are important questions.

- Does he ignore discrepancies?
- Does he match his oral language with movement across text?
- Does he check language structure with visual information?
- Does he check the sounds he is saying with the printed letters?
- Does he try to make language, movement and visual information line up together?

Self-correction

- Does he return to the beginning of the line?
- Does he reread from a few words back?
- Does he repeat the word only?
- Does he read on to the end of the line (a difficult and confusing behavior for young readers)?
- Does he repeat only the initial sound of a word?

Behavior at difficulties

- Does he seek help?
- Does he try again?
- Does he search for more information? How?
 - By rereading and taking another look?
 - By taking words apart, articulating letters or chunks?
 - By problem-solving using known words to get to new words?

Useful strategic activity with words

Check *Conceptos del texto impreso*, *Lectura actual del texto*, *Escritura de vocabulario*, *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras* and *Lectura de palabras*.

On *Conceptos del texto impreso*

- Does he recognize line rearrangement?
- Does he recognize word rearrangement?
- Does he recognize that the first and last letters are rearranged?
- Does he recognize that the medial letters are rearranged?

When reading text

- Can he attend to the detail in the print?
- Does he look for initial letters? Does he notice final letters?
- Does he recall some prior visual or writing experience of that word?
- Is he attending to parts of the word?

On writing tasks

- Does the child know some words in every detail?
- Can he “hear” the individual words in a sentence?
- Can he articulate words slowly?
- Can he break up words into sounds?

- Does he try to write new words using a sound analysis?
- Does he build a syllabic framework for a new word in writing?
- Does he know that vowels are consistent?
- Does he know that consonants are difficult and works at them?
- Does he reread what he has written, carefully?

Useful strategic activity with letters

Check *Conceptos del texto impreso*, *Lectura actual del texto*, *Escritura de vocabulario*, *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras* and *Lectura de palabras*.

Movements used to make letters

- Does the child write some letters easily?
- Does he form many letters without a copy?

Visual awareness

- Which letters can he identify?
- How does he identify them?
- Which letters does he attend to when he is reading?
- Could he detect an error because of a mismatch of letters?
- (Which letters were difficult?)
- (Which letters were confused one with another?)

Sounds

- How does the child attempt a word in the *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras* task?
- Does he articulate difficult words slowly?
- Can he isolate the first sound or syllable of a word that he hears?

Completing Side 2 of the *Resumen del instrumento de observación* for an individual child

*Using only the evidence which you have been reporting from the Instrumento de observación tasks, describe in a few lines the child's current way of responding. Point out what he can and cannot do on text reading. It may be that the records showed little evidence of problem-solving on *textos fáciles*, gave clear evidence of strengths and weaknesses on *textos instructivos*, and showed signs that effective processing was breaking down on *textos difíciles*. Characterize, clearly and succinctly, the processing on the *instructivo* level text.*

Indicate how the ways that the child works at the word and letter levels help or hinder his getting to the messages in reading and solving how to spell words in writing. This forces you, as his teacher, to pull together all the relevant information, providing a state-of-the-art overview. This is the starting point of a course of individual help.

ANÁLISIS DE ACTIVIDADES ESTRATÉGICAS DEL NIÑO/LA NIÑA

Estrategias útiles en texto: Alfonso sabe que el texto lleva el mensaje y parece controlar movimiento direccional y actividad estratégica temprana (1:1; y localizar y usar palabras, sílabas y letras conocidas y desconocidas al leer y escribir). Leyó textos fáciles con fluidez y entonación. Parece utilizar significado, estructuras de lenguaje e información visual al leer. Al punto de dificultad buscó con información visual en partes. En CTI notó un cambio en la secuencia/orden de las letras en una palabra e identificó letras, palabras y conceptos de principio y fin apropiadamente. También conoce el uso del punto, la raya y el símbolo de interrogación. En el dictado (OASP) autocorrigió dos palabras.

Estrategias problemáticas en texto: En texto fácil, pareció descuidar el significado al buscar con información visual. No identificó el cambio de renglones, la parte de abajo del dibujo, cambios en la secuencia de las palabras, ni la raya y la coma. En el dictado, separó una palabra en sílabas.

Estrategias útiles con palabras: Alfonso leyó 19 de 20 palabras con fluidez. Escribió 14 palabras y utilizó los impulsos de la maestra para generar otras. Parece controlar el concepto de palabra al leer y escribir. En OASP escuchó y anotó sonidos y partes en secuencia al escribir palabras, y autocorrigió dos. Al leer, partió una palabra en sílabas para resolverla.

Estrategias problemáticas con palabras: La formación de letras ('a' y 'n') afectó los resultados de la escritura del vocabulario y el dictado. En CTI, no reconoció cambios entre palabras e identificó 'al' (calmada) por la palabra 'la'. También separó una palabra en sílabas durante el dictado. Identificó las letras como 'palabras.'

Estrategias útiles con letras: Identificó 56 letras, la mayoría por nombre. Escuchó todos los sonidos de las letras en las palabras, aún los difíciles de oír. Evidencia de que puede utilizar las sílabas para resolver palabras desconocidas.

Estrategias problemáticas con letras: Identificó las letras como 'palabras'. Confunde algunas grafías visual o auditivamente similares: L/Ll; s-c/z; q/p; d/b; r/rr. Forma la mayoría de las letras de abajo para arriba y algunas utilizando círculos y líneas, que pueden confundirse con otras. Esto puede afectar la fluidez y su habilidad/percepción visual para resolver palabras desconocidas al leer y escribir.

Resumen: Parece controlar los conceptos de direccionalidad y la actividad estratégica temprana. Lee textos simples generalmente integrando significado, estructuras de lenguaje e información visual. En texto fácil intentó resolver una palabra desconocida utilizando info. visual, y pareció descuidar el sentido. Al escribir, monitoreó y corrigió 2 palabras de uso frecuente. Ha adquirido vocabularios amplios de lectura y escritura, que le sirven para monitorear su lectura y escritura, leer y escribir con fluidez y para resolver palabras desconocidas. Puede oír y anotar sonidos y partes en las palabras en secuencia, y pudo escuchar todos los sonidos en las palabras del dictado. Problemas con formación de letras.

Firma _____

Included in this chapter there is a completed *Resumen del instrumento de observación*, Side 2 for Alfonso whose task results are shown on Side 1 of the *Resumen* (see the example under “Writing the *Resumen del instrumento de observación*” above). This sheet provides an example of how a teacher might go about pulling together the evidence she has gathered from the administration of the whole *Instrumento de observación*. The summary statement on the bottom of Side 2 shows what the teacher wrote about the ways that Alfonso worked at problem-solving, or processing, in reading and writing.

The way of summarizing the survey results shown in the *Resumen* for Alfonso looks comprehensive. However, it is incomplete in that it does not tell the teacher how to search for those strategic activities which relate one level of linguistic organization to another; letters to words, and words to their meaningful contexts. We still do not know very much about changes in how the learner operates on several kinds of information at the same time, bringing different kinds of information together.

A full set of assessment records for two children appear in the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* professional learning module available to Descubriendo la Lectura teacher leaders at myliteracycouncil.org. Teachers who are learning how to administer the *Instrumento de observación* may find it useful to observe how the two children respond to the observation tasks and to talk with their colleagues about how the children’s results have been summarized. Integrating the several pieces of information is not easy. Practice and prior teaching experience are necessary, but it is very useful for a teacher to try to complete a summary sheet like this.

Summary for multiple assessments

On the next page you will find a record sheet called the Observation Summary for Multiple Assessments. There is space on this sheet to record information from successive administrations of the *Instrumento de observación* if these are needed to monitor children’s progress. The information summarized on the sheet shows the progress the children are making through a gradient of leveled books and something about the shifts in their processing behaviors as they work at extracting messages from text at each different level (*error*, *exactitud* and *autocorrección* rates). Raw scores and achievement stanines demonstrate how they compare with other students of the same grade on reading and writing tasks. When information is summarized in this way, it provides a useful resource for colleagues to share as they discuss the progress of individuals or groups of children.

OBSERVATION SUMMARY FOR MULTIPLE ASSESSMENTS (USA)

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Final # of Lessons: _____
 School: _____ Final # of Weeks: _____
 RR/ DLL/ LL Teacher: _____ ID # (Optional): _____
 Intervention (choose one): ☐RR ☐DLL ☐LL ☐ Exit Status (choose one): ☐A ☐P ☐R ☐M ☐I ☐N ☐O

SUMMARY OF ORAL READING

FALL		Instr.		Errors/ Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self- Correction Ratio
Date: _____	Stanine		Text Title				
1. Easy					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
2. Instructional					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
3. Hard					1: _____	_____%	1: _____

ENTRY		Instr.		Errors/ Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self- Correction Ratio
Date: _____	Stanine		Text Title				
1. Easy					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
2. Instructional					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
3. Hard					1: _____	_____%	1: _____

EXIT		Instr.		Errors/ Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self- Correction Ratio
Date: _____	Stanine		Text Title				
1. Easy					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
2. Instructional					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
3. Hard					1: _____	_____%	1: _____

YEAR END		Instr.		Errors/ Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self- Correction Ratio
Date: _____	Stanine		Text Title				
1. Easy					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
2. Instructional					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
3. Hard					1: _____	_____%	1: _____

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT		Instr.		Errors/ Running Words	Error Ratio	Accuracy Rate	Self- Correction Ratio
Date: _____	Stanine		Text Title				
1. Easy					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
2. Instructional					1: _____	_____%	1: _____
3. Hard					1: _____	_____%	1: _____

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

	Letter Identification		Word Test		Concepts About Print		Writing Vocabulary		Hearing & Recording Sounds in Words		Slosson Oral Reading
	Raw	Stanine	Raw	Stanine	Raw	Stanine	Raw	Stanine	Raw	Stanine	Raw
FALL DATE: _____											
ENTRY DATE: _____											
EXIT DATE: _____											
YEAR-END DATE: _____											
ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT DATE: _____											

Chapter 13

The teacher and the observations

SENSITIVE OBSERVATION: GUIDING LITERACY LEARNING

An observant teacher must respond sensitively to the individual child's next step into new territory. To be able to do this she must

- be familiar with what the child already knows
- be close at hand as he reads and writes
- know how to support his next leap forward, and
- allow enough space for the child to become an independent learner.

Such knowledge allows the teacher to guide the literacy learning of individual children. The same information allows a teacher to monitor the progress of groups of young children. She can quickly find out when children need a change of pace or a change of direction in order to maximize their opportunities to learn. Ideally a teaching program will be organized so that the teacher can

- observe how children are working and learning
- make and keep records
- monitor the progress of the competent children at spaced intervals, and
- monitor and guide the teaching of the less competent children at frequent intervals.

In addition, bilingual educators should consider several key principles when observing literacy development in emergent bilingual children.

- Early literacy instruction should be anchored in the child's home language to provide a strong foundation.
- Effective instruction should avoid concurrent translation between English and Spanish during early literacy development.
- Translanguaging is a natural phenomenon for children living in bilingual environments and teachers must work deliberately to develop and maintain both language systems.

Therefore, teachers should create instructional environments where literacy development in both Spanish and English remains central to the program design and guides instructional decisions.

The value of observing reading behaviors

Registros progresivos of text reading can be used whenever oral reading is appropriate. Teachers can use them in many ways.

1. **Capturing behavior for later consideration.** When teachers take a *Registro progresivo* as the child reads his book, they notice more about what the child is trying to do. They can also look back over this record, replay in their minds exactly what the child said and did, check on the validity of their assumptions, and think about the behavior. The record captures the behavior of the moment.
2. **Quantifying the record.** If a teacher counts how many words there are in the text that the child reads, she can quickly turn this behavior into an accuracy score, and relate the score to a gradient of book difficulty (see Chapter 7: Taking records of reading continuous texts). Her statement might read something like “Independently he reads Book Level 7 with 95% accuracy and Level 8 with 87% accuracy.”
3. **A cumulative record.** Change over time can be captured with such records taken from time to time while the child is reading instructional texts.
4. **Placement.** From such records, teachers can place children in instructional groups or classes in a school. A child who is changing schools can be quickly checked to see where he should be placed so he can be successful in his new school.
5. **For critical decisions.** Critical decisions about giving a young child special assistance of some kind, or rapid promotion, or a referral to the school psychologist, can be supported with a report on the child’s text reading behavior based on *Registros progresivos*. (Marie Clay advised her Child Psychology students to ask for such records partly because it puts a responsibility on teachers to be observant and partly because it saves the psychologist’s time.)
6. **To establish text difficulty.** Marie Clay thinks of progress in reading as being able to read increasingly difficult texts with accuracy and understanding. *Registros progresivos* are used by teachers to check the difficulty level of an instructional book in relation to a particular child’s competencies. Having such a behavioral record of exactly how a pupil reads a particular text gives teachers confidence to allow different children to move through different books at different speeds. They know they can still keep track of individual progress.
7. **Observing particular difficulties.** *Registros progresivos* provide opportunities for observing children’s confusions and difficulties. The teacher records every correct response with a check (✓) and records all *error* and *autocorrección* behavior. This

provides evidence of how the child works on words in text, what success he has, and what strengths he brings to the task. A teacher can quickly decide what might be the next most profitable learning point for that child and can check on this during teaching.

- 8. For research purposes.** The records of well-trained teachers taken on a series of texts, with a known gradient of difficulty, can yield a ranking of students on book level by accuracy. These will correlate highly with test scores in the first two or three years of schooling.

The value of observing writing behaviors

Standard ways of observing early writing behaviors supplement the teacher's daily observation in the classroom. They provide evidence of where the child's resources for text writing may be limited and need some special attention – knowledge of letters, sound analysis, taking words apart and constructing words – and the size of the pool of knowledge that makes up the child's writing vocabulary.

The teacher may become aware of a discrepancy between reading and writing progress, with strength in one not supporting the other. Seeing these two literacy activities out of balance the teacher will take opportunities to reinforce one with the other, calling the child's attention to the ways in which reading can help with writing and vice versa.

Teachers will also find out which children need more time and assistance as they work on independent writing tasks. It may be a question of showing some children again how to use classroom resources, or of delegating a peer to become a helper, or using some of a classroom assistant's time. For the hardest to teach, the help will need to be given by the teacher herself.

Information for the education system

There are several ways that an education system, a school system or a cluster of classes in a school can gain information on performance in that system by observing reading and writing behaviors.

- 1. Instructional emphases.** If a supervising teacher takes records of text reading with a wide sample of children, she will quickly discover whether the teaching is out of balance. Word-by-word reading, spelling out words, not attending to meaning, ignoring information from letters or word endings – all these will stand out clearly in the records and so will the good outcomes, like the child getting it all together smoothly, working on words in ways which surprise the teacher, enjoying the stories and commenting on possible plot and character outcomes, relating what is being read to other experiences. Such observations in bilingual programs can serve as valuable

catalysts for discussions about instructional decision making and strategies for improvement.

2. **Instructional features.** If instruction is changed and new emphases are introduced, *Registros progresivos* can be used to monitor the effects. Do the desired changes in children's processing of texts show up on the records? Can you see any adverse effects of the new teaching? Do the records suggest any minor adjustments now, without waiting for the summative assessment at the end of the year?
3. **Training teachers.** A *Registro progresivo* is an assessment which leads the teacher to ask herself questions about the child's needs. As she records a child's reading a teacher may discover new behaviors and begin to think about learning in new ways. For example, sometimes the reader goes back, repeating himself, rereading the correct message. Why does he do that? He was correct. Could it be that the child is surprised by what he read and has reread to monitor his own behavior to ensure that it is correct? Monitoring one's own language activities has a great deal of relevance for learning. It is important and needs to be encouraged.

Another contribution to teacher learning occurs when teachers keep today's record as a baseline and, over several occasions, observe the child again capturing progress. It is informative to look back at the records of the changes that have occurred.

4. **Information for lay persons.** Two groups that make demands on teachers are parents and administrators. Marie Clay and colleagues have been surprised at how impressed both groups have been with two outcomes of *Registros progresivos* taken over time. Teachers have used graphs of children's reading progress up through text levels (see Chapter 7: Taking records of reading continuous texts) in their appeals for resources to school management committees and school boards. Parents have also been reassured by such records and by having teachers sharing the portfolios of children's work which show their progressions in writing or the change over time in *Escritura de vocabulario*. We have found that behavioral records, if thoughtfully planned, communicate clearly to lay persons interested in education. Note that it is not the actual *Registros progresivos* that have been shared with lay people.

Along with *Registros progresivos* the other observation tasks, *Conceptos del texto impreso*, *Escritura de vocabulario*, *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras*, and *Identificación de letras*, that form part of this early intervention survey can show teachers which children do not understand some basic concepts about books and print, are trying to read with little knowledge of letters, or seem to know words but are not noticing letter sequences within them. *The confusions of young readers belong to all beginners: it is just that the successful children sort themselves out and the unsuccessful do not.* It is helpful to sort out confusions before they consolidate into unwanted habits.

To minimize carelessness, bias and variability in observation records

- there has to be a gradient of difficulty in the texts selected by teachers for children to read, and
- the teachers must be well trained. Six teachers scoring the same record should all get the same results. One teacher reading another teacher's record alongside a copy of the books should be able to replay what the child actually said.

Information to support an early intervention for some children

Early identification of children at risk in literacy learning has proved to be possible and should be systematically carried out not later than one year after a child has entered formal instruction. This gives children time to settle in and adjust to the demands of the first-year classroom. It also overcomes the problems of trying to identify those who fail to learn to read before some of them have had a chance to learn what reading and writing are about. In many ways it is sensible to try to predict this only after all children have had some equivalent opportunities to respond to good teaching.

At the beginning of formal literacy instruction children will differ in

- their awareness of the detail in print
- what they find confusing about print, and
- the ways they choose to work with print.

What is salient differs from child to child. Children can respond to an intervention especially tailored to their needs in individual instruction, but classroom teachers who have found these observation tasks useful for identifying children who need extra help must also consider how they should teach such children. For the lowest 20 percent of the age group more classroom attention alone is not likely to solve the problem.

Most of the assumptions about reading achievement and reading difficulty would not lead us to expect that children who have difficulty could ever catch up to their classmates or make continued normal progress. They would have to learn at greatly accelerated rates of progress to do that.

The Reading Recovery Development Project questioned whether such assumptions were well founded. We asked, "How many children, given a quality intervention early in their schooling, could achieve and maintain normal levels of progress?" In other words, for what percentage of the children having reading difficulties was it really a question of never having got started with appropriate learning patterns?

A quality model of Reading Recovery (see Clay, 2016) provided several dimensions of assistance for a child, in addition to his class program. These also apply to Descubriendo la Lectura.

- First, a shift to one-to-one instruction allows the teacher to design a series of lessons that begin where the child is, and not where the curriculum is. Any grouping of children for teaching forces a compromise on this position.
- Then, daily instruction increases the power of the intervention.
- The teacher strives to make the child independent of her (to overcome one of the major problems of remedial tuition) and she never does for the child anything that she can teach him to do for himself.
- Acceleration is achieved by all these means and also because the teacher never wastes valuable learning time on teaching something the child does not need to learn. She moves him to a harder text as soon as this is feasible but backs such progressions with quantities of early reading.
- Based on sound theory of literacy processing, the child is taught how to carry out operations to solve problems in text, how to monitor his reading, how to check his options, how to work independently on print.

It is not enough to have systematic observation procedures which monitor the progress of individual children. To be really effective a powerful second chance intervention must be provided. It should be viable within the education system and have its own checks and balances to give quality assurance and quality control. It needs to “live in” and adapt to small and large schools, small and large education systems, and different populations and classroom literacy instruction.

Many interventions for children with special needs never get to consider the following issues. It is necessary to demonstrate that

- the intervention can work with children
- teachers can be trained to make it work
- the intervention can fit into the organization of the school, and
- it can be run and maintained within an education system.

In considering those issues Marie Clay has learned that quality control of an intervention to recover children having difficulty requires teachers who can make sensitive observations in systematic ways; but that alone is not sufficient. To make an early intervention viable across time it is necessary that teachers can

- be trained concurrently in the conceptual and practical aspects of the intervention
- understand the teaching procedures
- apply them consistently and critically
- articulate and discuss their assumptions

and that they are supervised for a probationary period.

It is essential that

- those training teachers thoroughly understand the theory on which the intervention and procedures were based
- the teacher is a member of a school team which is mounting the intervention to reduce reading and writing difficulties in that school
- the professional development of teachers continues so that changes to the intervention arising from new research can be quickly translated into ways of retraining and modifying the practice of teachers, and
- the education system supplies resources for early intervention to save on higher outlay later to provide for older children who are still struggling with literacy.

As the original *Instrumento de observación* was created, a corresponding model for Reading Recovery in Spanish was also developed. This program, titled Descubriendo la Lectura (DLL), mirrors Clay's theoretical framework for early intervention as well as the intensive and sustained model for teacher preparation. Studies conducted on Spanish-speaking students involved in DLL have supported many of Clay's findings from Reading Recovery research. Early on, studies examining DLL's impact on Spanish-speaking students (Escamilla, 1992, 1994) concluded that student acceleration in Descubriendo la Lectura occurs in the same way and at the same rate as Reading Recovery. A more recent study by Borman et al. (2024) showed similar results. Furthermore, the intervention has historically proven to have a positive impact on Spanish-speaking students who were placed in reading instruction in a language that was not appropriate for them during their first year in school, students who used both English and Spanish when communicating orally, and students who struggled to become literate for other reasons.

Descubriendo la Lectura's effectiveness can be attributed, in part, to its comprehensive design that mirrors the English Reading Recovery program in both scope and intensity. The developers maintained program fidelity by avoiding shortcuts and implementing the complete model while carefully considering the unique features and complexities of the Spanish language, ensuring that the reconstruction respected both the integrity of the original framework and the linguistic demands of Spanish literacy development.

AN OVERVIEW

Low achieving children cannot profit from group instruction as easily as well-prepared children in the early years of school, so we need to fine-tune our instruction, and adjust to their individual learning histories, rather than buy another new instructional package or switch to a new method.

Systematic observation allows teachers to go where the child is and begin teaching from there. Some teachers might think, "When you reach the point where our program starts

you will be ready for instruction; until then you are not ready.” It makes more sense for the teacher to become a sensitive observer of children in order to help them make the transitions that have been planned for them.

A year at school will give most children a chance to settle, and to begin to try their abilities in literacy. Systematic observation will uncover which children are forming useful ways of working on print – habits, skills – whatever you want to conceptualize as central to learning at this stage. It makes good psychological and administrative sense to find out before too long which children are becoming confused by standard educational practices, so that they can be offered alternative approaches to the same goals.

The teacher must monitor the changes that are occurring in the individual learner if she is going to fine-tune her teaching. Otherwise, she will be holding back the fast movers or dragging along the slow movers, already out of their depth. Low achieving children can learn well if the teacher uses individual assessments to guide her teaching interactions with a particular child.

The teacher needs assessments that tell her about the child’s existing repertoire and how he is getting to those responses, and whether he is relating information from one area of competency to another. In literacy learning we are looking at ways of capturing processing, repertoire, strategic activity and problem-solving (see Clay, 2015b).

We want to record change over time in all these things as the child moves up a gradient of difficulty with increasing independence.

If instruction is flexible enough to respect individuality in the first stages of new learning, it can bring children gradually to the point where group instruction can proceed effectively with few confusions.

Observational instruments typically arise from particular kinds of theory and can lead to research. Different theories may lead to the construction of different observational tasks. Such theories might include measurement theory, or the psychology of learning, or developmental theory about change over time, or the study of individual differences, or theories of social factors and the influences of contexts on learning.

The observational tasks in this survey direct teacher attention to the ways in which children are finding sources of information in texts and working with that information.

This approach calls for teachers to spend time with individual children. But there is a conventional reaction which says, “This is not the teacher’s role.” Clay says, emphatically, it is!

If a teacher becomes more effective when she seeks and uses observational data to inform her instruction, then she needs assessments which are straightforward to administer and time within her busy schedule to carry out these observations. Schools must create time for teachers to use assessment tasks which have sound measurement characteristics and plan for these to be used as part of instructional practice in that school. Such tasks will produce reliable data that can be used to compare a child's progress at different points in time, and to compare the progress of different children, in the same or different classrooms and schools.

Above all, schools must be prepared to allow teachers time to observe children's literacy behaviors closely, and to work one-on-one with any children who are making slow progress with early literacy learning. This resource has emphasized that such observational information is equally important for emergent bilingual children as it is for teachers of monolingual English-speaking children.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Achievement stanines for the *Instrumento de observación*

Appendix 2

Chapter 5 (original): The reconstruction of the English Observation Survey into Spanish: An overview and discussion of issues by Kathy Escamilla, Ana María Andrade, Amelia G. M. Basurto and Olivia A. Ruiz

Stanines for the *Instrumento de observación*

For a more detailed explanation of the U.S. norms and correlations for the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial*, see *U.S. Norms and Correlations for Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial*, available on the publications page of the International Data Evaluation Center at www.idecweb.us. Stanines for the tasks of the *Instrumento de observación* are determined following the same methodology as the stanines for the Observation Survey.

Understanding the *Instrumento de observación* as an Assessment

The *Instrumento de observación* assesses early literacy behaviors. It is specifically tailored to the 4 to 7 age group. In New Zealand, children traditionally begin their formal instruction on their fifth birthday and norms have been established for ages 5 through 7 (Clay, 2019). In the United States, children enter first grade at a variety of ages. The U.S. norms are based instead on grade, not chronological age. They are national grade norms.

The *Instrumento de observación* was designed to directly inform reading instruction, not to maximize its properties for measuring group change. As a result, scores on the six tasks are not usually normally distributed. Individual tasks exhibit variously strong floor and ceiling effects. A *floor effect* on a measure means most scores are at or near the bottom of the distribution range of scores. A *ceiling effect*, inversely, means most scores of a measure are at or near the top.

This non-normal distribution of the *Instrumento de observación* is due to several reasons. First, most of the six tasks are closed sets. Students are asked to identify 56 letter forms, 39 phonemes, 25 concepts about print and 20 sight words. Second, the main goal of the *Instrumento de observación* is to accurately quantify early reading behaviors. At the beginning of the literacy learning process, certain behaviors are not observable or do not yet exist. Oral reading fluency is one example; children will typically learn to recognize certain letters, sight words and have a partial understanding of concepts of print well before they can read or write with any fluency.

Once the process of learning to read is well under way and the child is reading at a level typical for the end of first grade, letter knowledge becomes less important as a measure of literacy because most children will know most letters; such a measure will produce little or no useful variation at that point. Paris and Hoffman (2004) state that "...some skills, such as alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, and phonemic awareness, are universally mastered in relatively brief developmental periods. As a consequence, the distributions of data from these variables are skewed by floor and ceiling effects that, in turn, influence the correlations used to establish reliability and validity of assessments" (p. 214). What this means is that the fact that the *Instrumento de observación* is not like a norm-referenced test is a characteristic, not a flaw.

The *Instrumento de observación* has three other important characteristics:

1. The *Instrumento de observación* is administered in a standardized way through training. The resource *Administración y desarrollo del Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial en Descubriendo la Lectura* (Clay et al., 2025) was written to help train teachers to administer the six tasks.
2. Other than the training costs, the *Instrumento de observación* is free and practical to administer.
3. More so than scores, the specific item responses on the six tasks directly inform instruction.

For example, a score of 50 on the *Escritura de vocabulario* task denotes a child who can write 50 correctly spelled words in 10 minutes. These words could be *mamá*, *papá*, or *perro*, or they could be *madre*, *escuela* or *fuimos*. This is very useful information for the teacher. Similarly, knowing which concepts of print, which phonemes or which sight words the child masters is more directly informative for instruction than is a mere score.

Finally, the six tasks are called an *Instrumento de “observación”* for a reason. While interactively administering the six tasks to a child, the teacher can observe literacy behaviors in action. Some behaviors, such as the ability to *autocorregir* while producing fluent text are recorded systematically in the record of text reading. These observations become part of the repertoire of knowledge about the child that the teacher builds upon when initiating instruction. This in turn is a central tenet of *Descubriendo la Lectura* instruction, namely, the emphasis on always working from and building on the child’s strengths.

The *Instrumento de observación* shares some similarities to criterion-referenced tests in that for some tasks, the decision-making criterion is not performance relative to a norm but performance relative to a range of scores that help in instructional decision-making. It differs from most criterion-referenced tests in that no single raw score implies a cutoff, mastery, or passing level. The *Instrumento de observación* also shares some characteristics of Curriculum Based Measurement:

- It is standardized in administration.
- It is not usually normally distributed.
- It is designed to inform instruction.

As with many Curriculum Based Measurement assessments, the findings from the *Instrumento de observación* have been correlated with and validated by standardized, norm-referenced tests including *Apr enda*, a Spanish Reading Achievement Assessment (Escamilla et al., 1996).

Content validity of the *Instrumento de observación* was established by comparing each of the six observation tasks to each other in order to determine the extent of correlation between observation tasks (Escamilla et al., 1996). Reliability of the Spanish survey was established using the Cronbach's Alpha method and the test/retest method of analysis (Escamilla et al., 1996).

How to use the stanines

Some of the stanines used in this publication have been adjusted from their original mathematical computations. This has been done in order to facilitate the selection of Descubriendo la Lectura students. These stanines are clearly marked with an asterisk. As a result of this and the non-normal distribution of the scores, entry to exit or fall to spring comparison using stanines should not be done. This could yield false or misleading resultsⁱ

For example, the mathematical stanine that corresponds to text level 0 in fall is 4. For spring, text level 20 is stanine 5. If a child goes from text level 0 in fall to 20 in spring, this very positive shift in terms of raw scores corresponds to a shift of only one stanine, from 4 to 5. With the adjusted stanines, the raw score of 0 now corresponds to stanine 1.

It would then be tempting to say that the child went from a stanine of 1 to a stanine of 5, a considerable gain. This would be statistically wrong, misleading and unethical because mathematically, the gain was truly only from stanine 4 to stanine 5. The fact that stanine 4 corresponds to text level 0 in the fall is puzzling to some; this is due to the floor effect: half of all U.S. first graders have text level scores of 0, 1 or 2 in fall of first grade.

But, one could argue, a child that went from a text level of 0 to a level 20 did make a lot of progress; what can be done to show this? There are two good ways: First, simply report the raw scores; these are unambiguous. Second, use the national percentile ranks (NPRs) available on the publications page of the International Data Evaluation Center at www.idecweb.us. A child with a text level 0 in the fall in Descubriendo la Lectura is in the 11th percentile while a child who reads at level 20 in spring is in the 68th percentile. You could say this child went from being in the 11th percentile rank (scoring better than or equal to only 11% of the population) to being in the 68th percentile rank (scoring better than or equal to 68% of the population). This is quite an achievement.

To summarize,

- Use stanines for selecting students into Descubriendo la Lectura.
- Use raw scores for comparing the progress of students from fall to spring.
- Use percentile rankings to compare the progress of students from fall to spring.

Stanine tables for student selection: Updated May 2021

Stanines are a type of score based on the mean and standard deviation of scores on a task. They indicate how different from average a particular raw score is. The mean score belongs to stanine 5. In some cases, these stanines have been adjusted for the purpose of student selection. Use fall stanines from August to November, mid-year stanines from December to February, and year-end stanines from March to July.

Identificación de letras (IL)

The stanines for the revised *Identificación de letras* task are unavailable at the time of this printing.

Conceptos del texto impreso (CTI)

Purpose: To find what a child has learned about how spoken language is put into print.

Task: Perform a variety of tasks during book reading by the teacher.

Scoring: Maximum score = 25.

Stanine Groups									
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fall	0–5	6–7	8–9	10–11	12–13	14–15	16–17	18–20	21–25
Mid-year	0–10	11–12	13–14	15–16	17–18	19	20–21	22–23	24–25
Year-end	0–12	13–14	15–16	17–18	19–20	21–22	23	24	25

Lectura de palabras (LP)

Purpose: To find if a child is developing a personal resource of reading vocabulary.

Task: Read a list of high-frequency words.

Scoring: Maximum score = 20.

Stanine Groups									
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fall	0	1	2–4	5–8	9–12	13–18	19	–	20
Mid-year	0–5	6–10	11–16	17–18	19	–	–	–	20
Year-end	0–6	7–15	16–18	19	–	–	–	–	20

Escritura de vocabulario (EV)

Purpose: To find if a child is building a personal resource of words that can be written.

Task: Write all known words in 10 minutes.

Scoring: Count of words in a 10-minute time limit.

Stanine Groups									
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fall	0–2	3	4–7	8–11	12–17	18–24	25–31	32–38	39+
Mid-year	0–10	11–17	18–23	24–29	30–36	37–43	44–52	53–63	64+
Year-end	0–17	18–23	24–30	31–38	39–44	45–54	55–64	65–76	77+

Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras (OASP)

Purpose: To assess phonemic awareness by determining how well a child represents the sounds of letters and clusters of letters in graphic form.

Task: Write a dictated sentence, with credit for sounds correctly represented.

Scoring: Maximum score = 39.

Stanine Groups									
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fall	0–4	5–11	12–21	22–30	31–35	36–37	38	–	39
Mid-year	0–22	23–31	32–36	37	38	–	–	–	39
Year-end	0–28	29–34	35–36	37–38	–	–	–	–	39

Lectura actual del texto (LT)

Purpose: To determine an appropriate level of text difficulty and to record, using a *Registro progresivo*, what a child does when reading continuous text.

Task: Read texts representing a gradient of difficulty until the highest text level with 90% or better accuracy is determined, with teacher recording behaviors during the oral reading.

Scoring: Maximum score = 30.

Stanine Groups									
Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Fall	0 ^{*1}	0 ^{*2}	–	1	2	3–4	5–9	10–14	16–30
Mid-year	0	1	2–4	5–8	9–12	14–16	18	20–24	26–30
Year-end	0–2	3–4	5–10	12–14	16–18	20–22	24	26–28	30

*The raw scores in this stanine do not correspond to the mean and standard deviation for this task. They have been adjusted for the purpose of student selection.

¹A child who does not read the Level 1 text with 90% accuracy *even after it has first been read entirely by the teacher* is assigned a score of zero for data collection. A child who has an opportunity to read his own dictated text as written and read by the teacher is also assigned a score of zero. Use stanine 1 for student selection in the fall.

²A child who does read the Level 1 text with 90% accuracy *only after it has first been read entirely by the teacher* is assigned a score of zero for data collection. Use stanine 2 for student selection in the fall.

³ If a comparison involved two stanines that did not have asterisks (that is, had not been adjusted for the purpose of student selection), it would be permissible to use stanines to make student to student or fall to spring comparisons. It would be confusing, however, to use stanines for some comparisons and raw scores or percentiles for other comparisons.

Chapter 5 (original)

The reconstruction of the English Observation Survey into Spanish: An overview and discussion of issues

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Note: Chapter references in this reprinted material refer to the 1996 edition of the *Instrumento de observación de los logros de la lecto-escritura inicial* (Escamilla et al.). For current administration and scoring procedures, please consult the following chapters in this edition:

- *Conceptos del texto impreso*: Chapter 6
- *Registros progresivos*: Chapter 7
- *Identificación de letras*: Chapter 8
- *Lectura de palabras*: Chapter 9
- *Escritura de vocabulario*: Chapter 10
- *Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras*: Chapter 11

Results of the tests of concurrent validity and reliability are reported at the end of this chapter.

There are numerous considerations to be addressed when adapting an English language program for students from other cultural and linguistic groups. To reconstruct an observation survey such as this one, issues that needed to be considered included differences between Spanish and English in language structure, sound systems, syntax, and semantics as well as cultural differences. Further, it was crucial that the observation survey *not* be a literal translation, but that it be a conceptual reconstruction. The process of adaptation began in 1988 and was undertaken by three bilingual education teachers in Arizona who are native Spanish speakers – Chicanas – and who are sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity. In 1989, the three original creators invited a researcher from the University of Arizona to work with them to design a research agenda to document and validate the development of *El Instrumento de Observación* (Spanish Observation Survey) and the early intervention Spanish literacy program (*Descubriendo la Lectura*) which is a reconstruction of Reading Recovery into Spanish. The project researcher is also bilingual and has twenty-five years of experience in the field of bilingual/bicultural education.

These creators had already learned to administer the English Observation Survey and were participants in a yearlong intensive training related to English Reading Recovery. While learning the theoretical framework of the English Observation Survey, they began to construct an equivalent version in Spanish (later termed a reconstruction). Reconstruction of the English Observation Survey into Spanish took one year and was followed by two sets of research studies designed to establish the validity and reliability for the reconstructed Spanish survey (see Escamilla 1992a; Escamilla, Basurto, Andrade and Ruíz, 1992).

The reconstructed Spanish survey *El Instrumento de Observación*, like the English Observation Survey, consists of six observational tasks that collectively provide a profile of a student's reading repertoire. These observational tasks include: (1) Análisis Actual del Texto (*Running Records of Text Reading*); (2) Identificación de Letras (*Letter Identification*); (3) Prueba de Palabras (*Word Test*); (4) Conceptos del Texto Impreso (*Concepts About Print*); (5) Prueba de Vocabulario de Escritura (*Writing Vocabulary*); (6) Oír y Anotar Sonidos en las Palabras (*Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words – Dictation*). Each of these observation tasks, along with administration and scoring directions and criteria, will be discussed, in detail, in the following chapters. This chapter provides a discussion of the issues and complications that arise as materials and procedures, originally developed for one group of students, are subsequently reconstructed for a different ethnolinguistic group.

When materials originally created for one linguistic group are translated into another language, serious threats to validity and reliability are posed. After the Spanish Observation Survey (*El Instrumento de Observación*) was developed, it was determined that there was a need to conduct research studies to establish the validity and reliability of this newly created survey. These studies were conducted at two different times and with two different groups of students. The first study took place during school year 1989-90 with one hundred ninety students from Arizona (see Escamilla, Basurto, Andrade and Ruíz, 1992), and again in 1991-1992 with three hundred Spanish-speaking first-grade students from the states of Arizona, Texas, and Illinois (see Escamilla, 1992).

Validity studies of *El Instrumento de Observación* conducted in 1991-92 examined concurrent, construct, and content validity. Concurrent validity was established by comparing the six observation tasks on *El Instrumento de Observación* to the Aprenda norm-referenced Spanish Reading Achievement Test. Construct validity was established by comparing each of the six observation tasks on *El Instrumento de Observación* to each other in order to determine the extent of correlation between observation tasks. Content validity was examined through a back translation of the Spanish survey. The back translation involved having the materials that had been developed in Spanish translated back into English by persons who were not familiar with the original English version and then comparing the English obtained from the back translation to the original English.

Results of the tests of concurrent validity are reported in Chapter 7 for each observation task. Construct validity correlation coefficients ranged from .52 to .83 indicating that each observation task had a strong and positive correlation to other tasks in the survey. Results of the tests of content validity via the back translations will be discussed in greater detail below, and issues related to those results are probably the most interesting to persons who may be interested in developing the observation survey in other languages.

Because of the varied population of Spanish speakers in the United States and the world and the wide variety of dialects of Spanish spoken, it was crucial to apply an additional test of validity. This validity check was applied to assess the degree to which *El Instrumento de Observación*, developed for Spanish-speaking Mexican-American students in Tucson, Arizona, could be used with Spanish speakers from other cultural groups. To address the need to establish validity across dialects of Spanish, Brena and García (1993) administered *El Instrumento de Observación* to speakers of Spanish from three different dialects of Spanish. Their study included sixty first grade students in three different areas of the country (twenty in San Antonio, Texas; twenty in Chicago, Illinois; and twenty in Miami, Florida). Students in San Antonio were all Mexican-American; students in Chicago were all Puerto Rican, and students in Miami were all Cuban-American.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether language variation across cultural groups created significant barriers in understanding and comprehension for students taking *El Instrumento de Observación*. Students in the study took all of the observation tasks except for text reading (*análisis actual del texto*). Results of this study showed very little difference in either the range of scores or the mean and median scores of each of the tasks across language dialects. Further, for all three language groups, the range, mean, and median scores were very close to those students in Tucson. As a further check of comprehension Brena and García made anecdotal observation notes as students engaged in each observation task to document areas of confusion and/or frustration. As expected there were vocabulary words that differed across dialects, and these differences manifested themselves when students engaged in the writing vocabulary task and the letter identification task were asked to identify words that began with certain letters. However, the protocols for administration of each of the observation tasks were not problematic for any of the students in the study.

Results of this study led these two researchers to conclude that *El Instrumento de Observación* is valid for use with Spanish speakers who speak a variety of dialects of Spanish and who come from divergent cultural groups.

Reliability of the Spanish survey was established using the Cronbach's Alpha method of analysis for the following observation tasks: (1) Identificación de letras (*Letter Identification*); (2) Prueba de Palabras (*Word Test*); (3) Conceptos del Texto Impreso

(*Concepts About Print*); (4) Oír y Anotar Sonidos en las Palabras – Prueba de Dictado (*Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words – Dictation*). A test/retest method of analysis was used for Prueba del Vocabulario de Escritura (*Writing Vocabulary*). The first observation task (*Análisis Actual del Texto*) involves reading of whole texts and conducting running records (see Chapter 6). Since there is not a finite number of items, it was impossible to conduct a reliability analysis. Nor, it should be noted, was such an analysis conducted on the English version. Reliability results for other Spanish observation tasks are reported in Chapter 7, along with a detailed discussion of administration and scoring of each observation task.

As stated above, a final measure of construct validity involved a back translation of *El Instrumento de Observación* from Spanish back into English. This was done to ascertain whether or not the content of the Spanish version was equivalent to the original English. Two back translations were completed by native Spanish speakers who were familiar with the area of literacy and thus knew professional terminology, and so on. Neither was familiar with the English Observation Survey and thus were not content biased. The completed back translations were analyzed by Dr. Marie Clay, the creator of the English Observation Survey, and by the creators of the Spanish *El Instrumento de Observación*.

Results of these analyses established that the Spanish version was more than an equivalent of the English version. It represented a major reconstruction of the conceptual framework of the English observation tasks from English to Spanish. The discussion below is meant to outline reconstruction issues that were considered for each observation task as it was reconstructed from English to Spanish.

OBSERVATION TASK #1 - ANÁLISIS ACTUAL DEL TEXTO (*RUNNING RECORDS OF TEXT READING*)

This observation task involves the reading of whole texts and the taking of running records related to text reading. The task and procedures for administration are described in detail in Chapter 6. The major reconstruction issue involved in the creation of this task in Spanish was the identification and leveling of Spanish language books to be included in the observation task.

As a part of the overall development of an early identification/intervention program for Spanish-speaking students, the creators of *El Instrumento de Observación* have identified books in Spanish that can be used for both assessment and intervention. To date, more than six hundred books in Spanish have been identified. These books represent a gradient of difficulty in terms of characteristics of text and level of sophistication required for successful reading. When the reconstruction process began there were few children's books available in Spanish. Therefore, the creators had to translate/adapt appropriate texts

from English to Spanish. At that time, they quickly realized that translated texts can be problematic because of issues related to linguistic and cultural differences.

Major considerations for reconstruction of this task into other languages must include the availability of children's books written at varying levels of difficulty in languages other than English. Or, if books are going to be adapted from English to other languages, cultural authenticity and relevance become issues and must be considered. Translations that are purely literal in their nature may create cultural confusions and/or conflicts, or they may be culturally irrelevant. As discussed throughout this book, becoming literate involves interacting with text in a meaningful way. Text interaction and meaning making are enhanced when the cultural schemata of the reader is compatible with the cultural content of the text. Conversely, in the absence of cultural congruity, text interaction may be negatively impacted.

As an example to illustrate the above, we use the book *Nuestra Abuelita* (written originally in English and titled *Our Granny* [Cowley 1986]). This story was translated into Spanish in 1986. The original story and illustrations depict a modern-day grandmother who wears jogging suits and tennis shoes, has purple hair, and does funny things (e.g., she slides down a slide at a playground and shows her underwear, sings very loudly and off-key, and roller skates in the park). English-speaking children often find the story entertaining and see nothing offensive or unusual about the grandmother's behavior. Culturally, the grandmother in this story represents a "with it" grandmother – a desirable cultural attribute in the English-speaking world.

When this book was translated, words were changed but the illustrations were not. Consequently, the "image" of the grandmother in the book *Nuestra Abuelita* is not one that is currently compatible with the image of a grandmother in many traditional Spanish-speaking cultures. In these cultures grandmothers do not do "crazy" things or have purple teased hair and green eye shadow. In Arizona, many Spanish-speaking children reading this book did not find the grandmother's antics entertaining. Instead, they were often embarrassed by her behavior and were glad that she was not their grandmother. This cultural incongruity created a type of confusion for them, and they had difficulty interacting with the text, enjoying the story, or wanting to reread it.

The above example is offered not to be overly critical of the story *Nuestra Abuelita*, but rather to illustrate the potential for cultural conflict and confusion when texts are adapted from one language into another.

As a part of the reconstruction process then, it is necessary to identify and secure many children's books written in the desired language of observation and to ensure that adapted books are authentic culturally and linguistically.

As a caveat to this section, it is important to note that cultural and linguistic authenticity is a relative term. No attempt is made here to identify cultural and linguistic authenticity in a universal way for all Spanish- or English-speaking cultures. Instead, it will be incumbent upon teachers utilizing this survey to define the terms cultural and linguistic authenticity for their own region, cultural/linguistic population, and community.

OBSERVATION TASK #2 - IDENTIFICACIÓN DE LETRAS (*LETTER IDENTIFICATION*)

This task requires students to identify letters using sounds, letter names, and/or words that start with the letter. This task is described in detail in Chapter 7. To reconstruct this task from English to Spanish it was necessary of course, to add the letters that exist in Spanish but do not exist in English. These include, *ch*, *ll*, *ñ*, and *rr*. The simple addition of the Spanish letters could not complete the reconstruction process for several reasons. First, the letter *rr* never occurs at the beginning of a word, and therefore it is not possible to observe whether children know this letter by asking them to name a word that starts with *rr*. Similarly, *ñ* occurs most often in the middle of a word, rarely at the beginning. Therefore, for these two letters, it was necessary to adjust the instructions for administration to ask children if they could name words that have their sounds (*¿Sabes una palabra que tiene ese sonido?*). In other words, the standard directions had to be reconstructed from English to Spanish to accommodate the conventions of the Spanish alphabet.

Since this instrument was constructed with Spanish-speaking children in the United States, it was being constructed for use with children who come into daily contact with both English and Spanish. As a result of this phenomenon, children sometimes will know some letter names and sounds in Spanish and others in English. For example, children might look at the letter Q and say – “Como Q-tips” (like Q-tips). Since this observation survey is designed to observe and utilize what a student knows, it was necessary to modify the scoring sheet in order to give students credit for letter sounds or names they may know in English. The reconstruction of this task, then, considered letters, sounds, names, etc., that children may know in either English or Spanish.

Finally, the letter *w* was included in this task even though it does not exist in Spanish. Because of its occurrence in English, and the contact between English and Spanish in the United States, the creators found that many children know this letter as a result of exposure to two languages. The creators did not want to limit the opportunities for children to demonstrate what they know.

As a side note, this particular aspect of the reconstruction raised the issue of the need to expand the English Observation Survey to include letter names and sounds that other children may know in other languages and use when participating in the English Observation Survey.

OBSERVATION TASK #3 - PRUEBA DE PALABRAS (*WORD TEST*)

Standardized word tests are based on the principle of sampling from the child's reading vocabulary. In the development of the English Observation Survey, these word lists were constructed from the most frequently occurring words in basic reading texts used in particular school systems. In New Zealand, this task was constructed from the forty-five most frequently occurring words in the twelve little books of the "Ready to Read" series. In the United States, the Scott, Foresman Basal Reading Series and the Dolch Word List were used to create this task (Clay, 1993).

It would have been inappropriate simply to translate the words on either the New Zealand list or the Ohio list from English to Spanish. The fact that they represented words that frequently occurred in English reading materials did not necessarily mean they were words that were also frequently occurring in Spanish reading materials. Therefore, the reconstruction of this task in Spanish required examining Spanish reading materials and deriving lists of frequently occurring words. To accomplish this aspect of the reconstruction, three different sets of materials were examined. These included the *Cornejo Spanish Word Frequency List* (1980), the *Santillana Spanish Basal Reading Series* (1984), and the *Brigance Spanish Sight Word Vocabulary List* (1984).

From these materials, sixty frequently occurring words in Spanish were identified. These words were then separated into three lists. As a part of the validity and reliability studies, children were asked to read these sixty words. P-value tests were then calculated to determine the difficulty of each word. A P value is a statistical measure designed to ascertain which items on a given test or measure are the most and least difficult. On the Prueba de Palabras, P values were calculated to determine which of the 60 words were most difficult (that is, which words were most likely to be missed by children as they read them), and which were least difficult (those that were most likely to be read correctly by children). P-value results were then used to construct and order the final three lists of words in the Prueba de Palabras (*Word Test*).

The Prueba de Palabras is administered the same way in Spanish as in English and specific directions for administration and scoring are provided in Chapter 7.

OBSERVATION TASK #4 - CONCEPTOS DEL TEXTO IMPRESO (*CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT*)

The Conceptos del Texto Impreso (*Concepts About Print*) task is meant to observe what children have learned about the way we print languages. With regard to Spanish and English, there are many similarities: the layout of books such as the front and back, directionality (both languages are read in a left to right sequence with the left pages also being the first to be read), and the use of a Roman alphabet with similar capital and lower

case letters. In both languages, spaces are there for a reason, punctuation marks have meaning, and the print tells the meaning. All of the concepts exist in print in both English and Spanish, and these similarities facilitated the construction of this task in Spanish.

Even with the great number of similarities, however, this task had to be reconstructed in two ways. The first was the reconstruction of the booklet required in order to conduct this observation and the second was the reconstruction of the observation guide for teachers to use as they administer the task. A detailed explanation of the administration and scoring procedures for this task is included in Chapter 7 of the book. A discussion of reconstruction issues is included below.

The English books *Stones* (Clay 1979c) and *Sand* (Clay 1972b) were reconstructed for this task and are titled *Las piedras* and *Arena* in Spanish respectively. Again, it was not possible to simply translate these books; they had to be reconstructed as conceptual equivalents. Areas where conceptual equivalents were created are discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, with regard to the use of punctuation as meaning, it was necessary to add the appropriate Spanish language punctuation marks, including the inverted question mark and the *guión*, which is one way that direct quotations are noted in Spanish (Items 15 and 18 on both the Spanish and English versions).

Second, Item 21 observed whether or not children can identify words that are commonly reversed. In the English booklet, *Stones*, the reversible words are was/saw. Literally translated, these words become *fue/vio* (was/saw). In Spanish, they are not visually similar, nor are they words that Spanish-speaking children commonly reverse when they are reading. The challenge was to create an equivalent that would provide an opportunity to observe whether children could identify commonly reversed words in Spanish without losing the meaning of the story, *Las piedras*. The Spanish reconstruction created a sentence that maintained the meaning of the story and used the words *la/al* and *ya/ay* in *Las piedras* and *ya/ay* and *las/sal* in *Arena*. These are words that are, in fact, commonly reversed by Spanish-speaking children and could be included in the observation task without losing meaning in the story.

In the scoring sheet, Items 12-14 observe what children know about word order and letter order. The first Spanish re-creation phrased the observation task in the following way: “Un cambio del orden de las palabras” (a/one change in word order) and “un cambio del orden de las letras” (a/one change in letter order) respectively. This item is in many ways the most interesting, as little can be done about it.

In the back translations one translator translated the word *un* to be *a* and another translated the word *un* to be *one*. Both are correct as in Spanish, the word *un* can be either an indefinite article or a number.

The original English version used the word *one* and not *a*, and it was felt the maintenance of the word *one* was important so as not to confuse interpretation of the Spanish, there is not a more specific way to state this directive. The original Spanish re-creation was, therefore, left intact, but the number *1* will be included in parentheses after the word *un* for clarification. This entire issue illustrated the difficulty of creating translations that are completely equivalent and will present special challenges for those persons wanting to reconstruct these tasks into languages that are less similar to each other than Spanish and English.

Finally, in Spanish, unlike English, an accent mark is a significant concept about print. Accents are not mere punctuation marks because they change the meaning of words (e.g., *papa* means potato, but *papá* means father; *si* means if, but *sí* means yes). Awareness of how accents work provides the child with one more strategy to use in problem solving of texts, particularly as text reading becomes more difficult. Therefore, in the Spanish version of this task, an additional item was added (Item 19). This item allows for teachers to observe student knowledge of accent marks. For this reason, Conceptos del Texto Impreso in Spanish has twenty-five items while the English version has only twenty-four.

OBSERVATION TASK #5 - PRUEBA DEL VOCABULARIO DE ESCRITURA (WRITING VOCABULARY)

The writing vocabulary task in the English Observation Survey asks children to think of all the words they know and to write them down. They are given ten minutes for this task and may be given prompts by teachers (e.g., Can you write your name? Do you know how to write *is* or *to*?). Specific directions for administering and scoring this task are included in Chapter 7. With regard to reconstruction, this task was probably the one that most lent itself to reconstruction. Directions for administration were created in Spanish, and prompts that were used were selected from words frequently found in children's Spanish literature books.

Issues created in this task related to the scoring of the task and to the use of accent marks and tildes that exist in Spanish but not in English. Spanish uses accent marks and tildes as part of the graphemic system of the language, and this linguistic feature needed to be included in the creation of this observation task. As with Task 2 (Identificación de Letras – *Letter Identification*), Spanish-speaking children living in the United States often know how to write English words as well as Spanish words, especially words from the environmental print outside of school. Therefore, in addition to writing words like *mamá*, *libro*, *mi*, etc., many children also write words like *love*, *stop*, and *K-Mart*. Further, children who use two languages also interpret messages using two languages, and this interpretation often involves code-switching. For example, children engaged in this task may say, “Yo sé escribir mamá” (I can write mom) and then write “mom” in English, or “Yo sé escribir te quiero” (I can write I love you) and then write “I love you” in English.

Or a teacher may prompt, “¿Puedes escribir rojo?” (Can you write red?), and the child writes “red” in English, or “¿Puedes escribir papá?” (Can you write dad?), and the child writes “dad” in English.

In Spanish, unlike English, written accent marks and tildes are meaning makers. As cited earlier, the word *papa* without the accent means potato, but the same word *papá* written with an accent means dad. Therefore, the use of accent marks in Spanish is important in the observation of children’s writing and is included as a part of the scoring system on this task.

Again, the purpose of doing observations is to note children’s strengths. Therefore, it was decided that Spanish-speaking children who include English words on the observation task should be given credit for them. Similarly, it was decided that children who take the English Observation Survey and write words on other languages should also be given credit for this knowledge provided the teacher can read them and the words are correctly written.

OBSERVATION TASK #6 - OÍR Y ANOTAR LOS SONIDOS EN LAS PALABRAS – PRUEBA DE DICTADO (HEARING AND RECORDING SOUNDS IN WORDS – DICTATION TASKS)

This observation task is called dictation because the teacher asks the child to record a dictated sentence. The dictated sentence is scored by counting the child’s representation of sounds (phonemes) by letters (graphemes). This observation task enables teachers to observe the awareness that children possess with regard to phoneme/grapheme relationships. As with other observation tasks discussed in this chapter, the directions for administration and scoring are included in Chapter 7.

Also, as with all other tasks, it was necessary to create a dictado (*dictation*) that was a conceptual equivalent rather than a literal translation. The English Observation Survey contains five different dictation sentences, each having thirty-seven sounds. In the English version, there are words that contain two letters but only one phoneme (e.g., in the word *school*, the letters *oo* represent only one sound and in the word *she*, the letters *sh* represent only one sound). The English version also includes words that have letters that do not have sounds (e.g., in the word *home*, the letter *e* does not have a sound and in the word *today*, the letter *y* does not have a sound).

In the process of reconstructing this task into Spanish, the developers created sentences that included an equivalent number of phonemic sounds, while also considering the phoneme/grapheme relationships that best represent the Spanish language. The Spanish version has four sentences, and the English version has five. This reconstruction included words that, as in English, had more than one letter with only one phonemic sound (e.g.,

the letters *qu* have one phonemic sound that is the same as the letter *k* in English). The letters *ll*, *rr*, and *ch* also have one phonemic sound in Spanish but are considered one letter. However, unlike English, Spanish has no silent letters that occur at the end of words. Using silent letters on a task such as this is relevant in English but not in Spanish. Therefore, no silent letters at the end of words were included in Spanish. Further, Spanish, unlike English, has several letters that phonemically have the same sound, and in order to create an authentic dictation task in Spanish, it was necessary to include these letter sounds. As an example, *ll* and *y*; *c*, *s* and *z*; and *b* and *v* are Spanish letters that all have the same phonemic sounds, and all are letters that frequently occur in Spanish words.

The dictation sentences in the Spanish survey, then, were not translated from English, but were DEVELOPED to create a dictation task that enables a teacher to observe a Spanish-speaking child's knowledge of the sound/symbol (phoneme/grapheme) relationship in the language. In order to give the reader a point of comparison, sentences from the Spanish and English tasks are presented below. As a final note, the Spanish sentences each contain thirty-nine phonemic sounds rather than thirty-seven as in English. Spanish words, in general, have more phonemic sounds than English words, thus necessitating the extra phonemes to create equivalent sentences.

Dictation Sentences from English Observation Survey:

I have a big dog at home. Today I am going to take him to school.

Mum has gone up to the shop. She will get milk and bread.

I can see the red boat that we are going to have a ride in.

The bus is coming. It will stop here to let me get on.

The boy is riding his bike. He can go very fast on it.

Oraciones del Dictado en Español (Spanish Dictation Sentences with English Translations):

Tengo un perro en la casa. Lo llevo al parque conmigo. (*I have a big dog at home. I take him to the park with me.*)

Papá está en casa. Dice que vamos a jugar a la pelota. (*Dad is at home. He says we are going to play ball.*)

Yo tengo una gata café. Le gusta dormir en mi cama. (*I have a brown cat. She likes to sleep in my bed.*)

Ya viene el tren. Se va a parar aquí. Nos vamos a subir. (*Here comes the train. It is going to stop here. We are going to get on.*)

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, there are numerous issues that need to be considered when adapting materials developed for one language group into another language. The developers of the Spanish survey, *El Instrumento de Observación*, deliberated these issues at length as they created the tasks included in this book. As a result, the tasks presented in the following chapters represent tasks that are conceptually equivalent to those in the English Observation Survey. At the same time, these tasks were constructed in a manner that utilized the structural and semantic system of the Spanish language as a second point of departure to ensure authenticity in development.

RESULTS OF TESTS OF CONCURRENT VALIDITY

Identificación de letras

Validity: Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 282 children in fall 1991; $r = .60$ Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 202 children in spring 1992; $r = .66$ (Escamilla, 1992)

Reliability: 282 children in fall 1991, $r = .94$; Cronbach's Alpha Analysis 202 children in spring 1992, $r = .96$; (Escamilla, 1992)

Conceptos del texto impreso

Validity: Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 282 children in fall 1991; $r = .53$ Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 202 children in spring 1992; $r = .51$ (Escamilla, 1992)

Reliability: 282 children in fall 1991, $r = .69$; Cronbach's Alpha Analysis 202 children in spring 1992, $r = .82$; (Escamilla, 1992)

Lectura de palabras

Validity: Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 282 children in fall 1991; $r = .72$ Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 202 children in spring 1992; $r = .75$ (Escamilla, 1992)

Reliability: 282 children in fall 1991, $r = .95$; Cronbach's Alpha Analysis 202 children in spring 1992, $r = .97$; (Escamilla, 1992)

Escritura de vocabulario

Validity: Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 282 children in fall 1991; $r = .66$ Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 202 children in spring 1992; $r = .65$ (Escamilla, 1992)

Reliability: 282 children in fall 1991, $r = .95$; Test/Retest 202 children in spring 1992, $r = .87$; Test/Retest (Escamilla, 1992)

Oír y anotar sonidos en palabras

Validity: Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 282 children in fall 1991; $r = .70$ Correlation with Aprenda Spanish Reading Achievement Test for 202 children in spring 1992; $r = .60$ (Escamilla, 1992)

Reliability: 282 children in fall 1991, $r = .96$; Cronbach's Alpha Analysis 202 children in spring 1992, $r = .95$; (Escamilla, 1992)

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