Monitoring Progress for Guided Reading

Students learn and integrate information at different rates. You need to monitor reading progress to assess each student's development of reading behaviours and to make decisions about the appropriate text level for each student. Planning further instruction is the primary purpose of ongoing observation and assessment of students' strengths and weaknesses. What you learn will also help you plan instruction not only for reading but also for oral language development, writing, and word study.

Monitoring students' progress during Guided Reading sessions includes ongoing observation and recording of students' reading behaviours, their strategy use, and the levels at which they are reading. You can devise a recording tool you find useful for your specific purposes or use some or all of the following tools:

- Reading Behaviours and Strategies Record Sheets (Book Handling and Print Tracking, Engagement with Texts, Comprehension, Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record, Self-Monitoring, Word Recognition)
- Behaviours to Notice and Support
- Non-fiction and Fiction Comprehension
- Quick Rating Scale
- Group Monitoring
- Individual Progress Chart

Together with initial and final assessments, the assessment tools you use for monitoring students' ongoing progress should provide you, the school, and the parents or guardians with a comprehensive overview of each student's progress and needs as a reader. The assessment tools you use can follow students throughout their schooling to provide uniform assessment of their reading skills from year to year. This information will also help establish starting points for initial assessment at the beginning of the next school year. For example, if the grade three teacher knows that a student was working at level M at the end of grade two, then he or she does not have to guess where to set the initial assessment.

Reading Behaviours and Strategies Record Sheets

To establish individual assessment records, you can use the Book Handling and Print Tracking, Engagement with Texts, Comprehension, Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record, Self-Monitoring, and Word Recognition BLMs to record each student's literacy development.

You can use the record sheets to make observations about targeted strategies as you listen to a student read during Guided Reading or an individual conference. You can also use the record sheets to summarize your observations after completing a running record or miscue analysis.

These Record Sheets also include sample prompts you can use to help students develop particular thinking processes. If a prompt does not elicit the desired reading behaviour, you can model the behaviour. In this way, you can immediately tie assessment to instruction. When a student exhibits a desired reading behaviour,

you can change a prompt into a reinforcement. For example, if a student corrects a misread word, instead of asking, "Does that make sense?" you can say, "I like how you checked whether the word made sense in that sentence." This is particularly useful in the During Reading part of the session when you listen to individual students read.

To monitor comprehension strategy use, you can use the Comprehension Strategies Anecdotal Record. This monitors the student's use of eight comprehension strategies: self-monitoring, analyzing, sequencing, making connections, predicting, inferring, evaluating, and synthesizing.

This anecdotal record can be used in the During Reading portion of a Guided Reading session for jotting down and dating notes related to the strategy receiving focus for a particular lesson. The prompts on the sheet permit you to elicit information from the student, as well as to help the student solve problems. This anecdotal record can also be used during individual conferences during Independent Reading.

Behaviours to Notice and Support

For regular, informal observation of individual students' reading, you can use the descriptors on the Behaviours to Notice and Support BLMs. Focus on the reading behaviours listed for the level of book the student is reading. A quick, informal assessment of a student's reading will help you determine if a book is at the appropriate level for that student.

You can place a checkmark (✓) beside any behaviour that you observe. Alternatively, you can make a slash (/) when you first observe the behaviour and turn the slash into an "X" when you feel the behaviour is performed frequently. Dating your observations will help you to track a student's progress.

This assessment tool can help you to decide whether a reader is ready to read the next level of text. If all behaviours are demonstrated on one level, introduction of the next level may be appropriate.

Non-fiction and Fiction Comprehension

For a quick assessment of a student's comprehension of a text, you can use the Non-fiction Comprehension or Fiction Comprehension rubrics. If you are assessing comprehension for an info-fiction text, use the rubric that is closest to the majority of the book; for example, the fiction rubric may be most appropriate for a narrative non-fiction. Students should demonstrate comprehension at level 3 for the text to be at instructional level. If comprehension is at level 4, then the book is at the student's independent reading level. Below level 3, the text is too hard.

Quick Rating Scale

To keep ongoing summary observations at the conclusion of each Guided Reading lesson, you may wish to use the Quick Rating Scale. This "thermometer profile" can be filled in quickly at the conclusion of each Guided Reading lesson. One thermometer measures word recognition and the other comprehension. You shade the levels you have observed for each student.

Once the student has demonstrated strong ratings in both categories for two books, consider introducing the student to a new level of text and/or moving him or her to a new group. If a student is struggling with the current level of text, consider switching to a level of text where he or she can experience success. In the case of a struggling reader, rather than checking the student's comprehension and word recognition for several books, offer a lower level of text for the next Guided Reading session to avoid frustration.

Teaching Tip: If only one student in a group demonstrates the strengths or a need for more support, move the student to a new group. If all students in a group demonstrate strengths, consider introducing a new level of text to the entire group.

Group Monitoring

The Group Monitoring anecdotal record sheet allows you to make more detailed notes for each group member than the Quick Rating Scale. It allows you to summarize the group's needs in order to make decisions about the next lesson.

Individual Progress Chart

Individual student records are essential to keep track of the text levels that each student works with over the course of the school year. You may want to use the Individual Progress Chart for this purpose.

Write the date in the square beside the level at which the student is reading. Make note of students who seem stuck at a particular level.