



## Assessing Oral Language Development and Early Literacy

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### Agenda

- Introduction and Agenda
- Developing reading skills
- Factors that predict literacy outcomes
- Assessment process for pre-readers
- Summary/Q&A



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### Learning Objectives

1. Participants will be able to identify at least two key developmental tasks associated with reading.
2. Participants will be able to describe at least one way that oral language impacts reading acquisition.
3. Participants will be able to identify at least one appropriate instrument that can be used in the assessment of key developmental reading tasks.

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## DEVELOPING READING SKILLS

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### Developmental Acquisition

#### *Phonological Skills*

- Receptive - Language by ear
- Expressive - Language by mouth

#### *Orthographic Skills*

- Receptive - language by eye
- Expressive - language by hand

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### Developing Reading Skills

1. Decode single, pronounceable words accurately and fluently (non-words).
2. Decode real words accurately and fluently.
3. Integrate word decoding and sentence comprehension.
4. Read for comprehension.

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**Kindergarten**

1. Name letters accurately.
2. Identify and generate rhyming words.
3. Segment syllables and phonemes in spoken words.

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**Grade 1**

1. Accurate naming of real words without context clues.
2. Accurate decoding of pseudowords without semantic cues.

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**Grade 2**

1. Name real words accurately and quickly without context clues.
2. Decode pseudowords accurately and quickly without semantic cues.

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**Grade 3**

1. Name real words accurately and quickly without context clues.
2. Decode pseudowords accurately and quickly without semantic cues.
3. Silent decoding.
4. Silent reading fluency.

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**Grade 4 and above**

1. Word comprehension.
2. Sentence comprehension.
3. Paragraph comprehension.

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### Several Factors Predict Literacy Outcomes



- Socioeconomic status
- Oral Language Skill
  - Word Knowledge
  - Grammar and Syntax
  - Listening Comprehension
- Phonological Awareness
  - Rhyming, Syllables, Onset-Rime, Phonemes
- Alphabet Knowledge
- Letter-Sound Knowledge
- Working Memory/Executive Functions

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### Socio-Economic Status

- The better the socioeconomic status of a child's family, the more likely that child is to be "ready" for school.
- Family socioeconomic status appears to explain a substantial portion of the racial and ethnic gaps in readiness.

(Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McLanahan, 2005)

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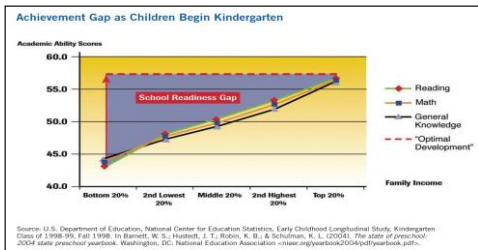
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### Achievement Gap and Family Income



(Klein & Knitzer, 2007)

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### Language is Oral and Written, Receptive and Expressive



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### Importance of Oral Language

If children have been offered fewer opportunities to hold conversation they may:

- have limitations in the grammar they control
- have difficulties comprehending oral and written language
- have limited control of some of the most common sentence structures used in storybook English
- be unable to anticipate what may happen next in sentences

(Gentile, 2003)

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## Language and Literacy

Language  Literacy

Early development of reading depends critically on whether the receptive phonological component of the aural system and the expressive phonological component of the oral system are developing in an age-appropriate manner.

(Berninger 2007)

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## Developing Language Competence

What is the connection between oral and written language?

- a. Oral language provides the foundation for the development of reading and writing;
- b. the relationship between oral language and literacy development is reciprocal in nature, with interconnections originating in early childhood;

ASHA, 2001

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## Developing Language Competence

What is the connection between oral and written language?

- c. children with speech and language impairments are at increased risk for difficulties with early and conventional literacy development; and
- d. intervention for oral language can positively influence literacy development, and vice versa.

ASHA, 2001

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# Assessing Oral Language and Early Literacy

## Adam Scheller, Ph.D., NCSP

### Discourse Skills, i.e. Foundation of Literacy

- Discourse Skills
  - participate appropriately in a conversation,
  - tell a story or describe an event (i.e., narrative discourse),
  - and read and write informative (expository) text.
- Enable students to share knowledge with each other and adults.
- Conversational discourse can provide the exposure and modeling needed to shift from an informal language register to a literary or academic one.

(Gentile, 2011)

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### Summary of Risk Factors

- Nature of Language Impairment
  - Widespread language problems greater risk than isolated language problem
  - Vocabulary (receptive and expressive) and grammar (comprehension and production) predictive of reading achievement.
- History of Language Impairment
- Associated Risk Factors
  - Child Factors (attention, behavior, cognitive)
  - Family Factors (LEP, SES, parent education, familial history of reading difficulties)

(Justice, 2002)

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## WORKING MEMORY & EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

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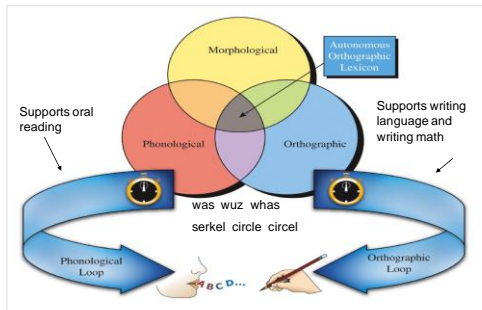
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**Written Language Problems Based on a Working Memory Architecture (Berninger, 2007)**



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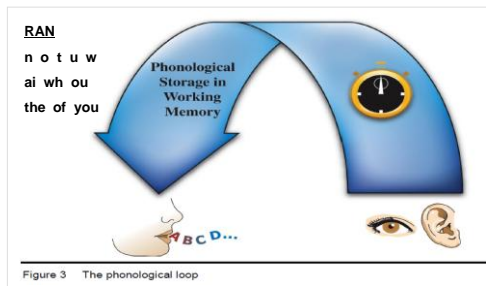
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**Phonological Loop**



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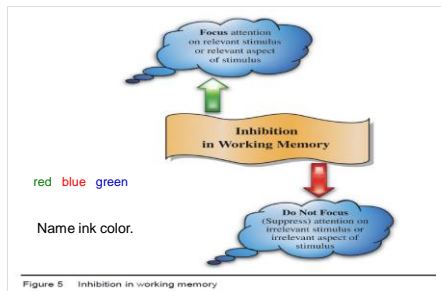
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**Executive Functions – Inhibition**



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## Assessment Process for "Pre-Readers"

1. Oral Language
2. Early Reading Indicators

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## ORAL LANGUAGE

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### OLAI-2 Assessment

- Identify students whose experiences have not adequately prepared them for language demands and learning  
...also, provide appropriate instruction
- Identify, organize, and address needs of students underperforming in reading and writing
  - Monitor Language, Literacy, and Learning Behavior

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### Sections (cont.)

- **Repeated Sentences:** Degree of control of the most common grammatical and sound structures in text
- **Story Retelling:** Ability to link sentences in sequence and develop a logical narrative (beginning, middle, and ending)

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### Positive Learning Behavior

1. Patience and impulse control
2. Dealing with adversity in positive ways
3. Following instructions and working cooperatively in a group
4. Delayed gratification for future reward
5. Taking risks, persisting, and learning the value of hard work



The student interacts positively with the teacher, approaches and focuses on the task.

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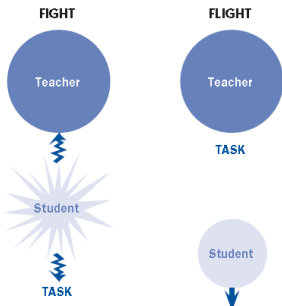
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The student confronts the teacher or the task to avoid the work.

The student flees from the task and interaction with the teacher or the task.

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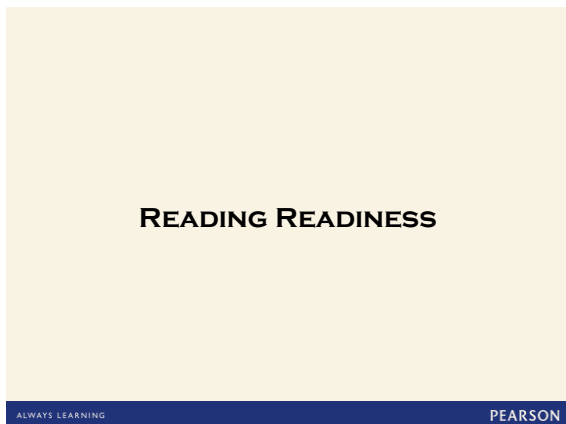
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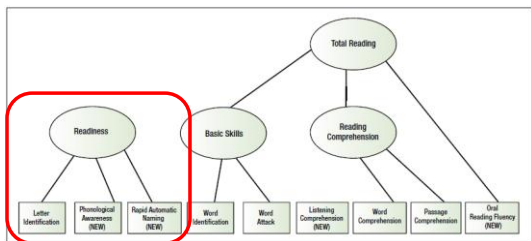
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### WRMT-III Factor Structure



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### WRMT-III Readiness Cluster

- Focuses on pre-reading skills highly predictive of decoding success.
- Made up of RAN, Phonological Awareness, Letter Identification (highly predictive of later decoding ability)



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### Letter Identification

- Examinees who score significantly below their peers on Letter Identification will need explicit instruction in:
  - Identifying and naming letters  
*AND*
  - The connection between letter names and the alphabetic principle
    - Knowing the name of the letter *b* and its *distinct* representative sound

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### Interpreting Phonological Awareness

- The five sections of Phonological Awareness begin with tasks that children generally find easier, such as first and last sound matching and rhyme production, proceeding to more difficult tasks, such as blending and deletion.
- Where to begin in the instructional sequence.

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### Compare Phonological Awareness and RAN

- Subtypes of severely impaired readers (who are often described as dyslexic).
  - Subtype 1: displays deficits in phonological awareness.
  - Subtype 2: deficits in naming speed.
  - Subtype 3: most serious and shows deficits in both areas.
    - This group, referred to as the double-deficit subtype;

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### Double Deficit Intervention

- Treatment for these examinees should include an emphasis on phonological awareness and decoding
- Explicit training in establishing automaticity in both areas

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# Assessing Oral Language and Early Literacy

## Adam Scheller, Ph.D., NCSP

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**Webinar questions or comments?**

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