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# ORGANIZING OBSERVABLE READING BEHAVIORS

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ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE/READING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

All teachers observe their students while they read. That is part of the job. The question is: How well organized is the observation? For example, when asked for information about the child who is being referred because of a reading problem, what can be said and how logically is it organized? Or, when facing the parent of a child with a reading problem, what information might be reasonable to have at hand?

Within the framework of the current emphasis on "Mainstreaming," how about the reading teacher and the classroom teacher who want to coordinate the reading instruction of the child who requires special instruction? What might the reading teacher look for, and how will she/he organize these classroom observations that seem to contribute to the establishment of a coordinated reading program?

The suggestion here is that both the classroom teacher and the reading specialist use a checklist of observable reading behavior as a device to facilitate the organization of and communication about the classroom reading behavior of the child with a reading problem. Specifically, the Reading Behavior Checklist which follows is meant to serve both the classroom and the special reading teacher as a guide in their attempts to organize their observations of classroom behavior related to the child's reading problem. The RBC has seven sections: oral reading, oral responses to questions about the material read, written and/or workbook type assignments, voluntary reading, behavior when in a learning group, test-taking behavior, and information from records or files.

## Reading Behavior Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I.

### Oral Reading

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Too Fast

OK

Too Slow

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Word-by-Word

Monotone

Expression

---

Too Many Errors

OK

Without Errors

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## II.

## Oral Responses to Questions About Material Read

Does Not Answer When Called Upon	Attempts to Answer When Called Upon	Volunteers Answers
Answers Are Correct Infrequently	Answers Are Correct Sometimes	Answers Are Correct Almost Always

## III.

## Workbook Type Assignments

Almost Never Completed on Time	Usually Completed On Time	Completed Swiftly
Answers Usually Wrong Or Incomplete	Some Answers Wrong Or Incomplete	Few to None Wrong Or Incomplete
Messy Printing Or Handwriting	Could Be Neater	Neat Printing Or Handwriting
Usually Needs Special Help with Directions	Sometimes	Dir. Usually Followed Without Special Help
Frequent Spelling Errors	Some Spelling Errors	Almost No Spelling Errors
Sentences And/Or Paragraphs Usually Incomplete	Sometimes	Sentences And/Or Paragraphs Complete

## IV.

## Voluntary Reading

Does NOT Choose To Read in Free Time	Sometimes Does	Usually Does
Chooses Difficult Books	OK	Chooses Easy Books
Finishes Books Quickly	OK	Does Not Complete Reading Books
Reads on One Topic	Reads on Several Topics	Reads on Many Topics

## V.

## Behavior When In A Group

Frequently Does <i>Not</i> Stay On Task	Generally Stays On Task	Exerts Positive Leadership Role
Disrupts Group	OK	Overly Quiet Daydreams?

## VI.

Test-Taking Behavior		
Completes Test Too Fast	OK	Does Not Complete Tests Usually
Test Must Be Read To Student	Some Sections Must Be Read To Student	Can Read Test

## VII.

Information From Cum. Records/Tests		
Latest Reading Test Score Is Low	OK	High
Absences Frequent	Few	None
Suffers From Chronic Physical Problems	What Is the Problem?	None
Reading Test Scores Have Been Low in Past	Average	High

As can be seen, RBC is in fact a checklist of what can be observed. It eliminates a lot of writing, and at the same time makes certain that a variety of observable behaviors are considered. However, a caution is in order: No checklist should be treated as though it cannot be changed. Indeed, specific situations should demand modification of the RBC as it is presented here. But if the teacher keeps in mind that the purpose of this checklist is to aid her/him in organizing and communicating information about a child with a reading problem, then either use of the RBC as it is presented here or use with modification are appropriate.