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Multiple Measures of Reading Assessment and the Effects on Data-Driven Instruction

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by

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Abstract

This research study takes a closer examination of two reading assessments used at the intermediate level: the Developmental Reading Assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory. These reading assessments were evaluated by determining what their areas of foci are and what types of information they provided about an individual student. Data were collected over a period of four weeks using an online teacher questionnaire and by conducting two semi-structured interviews. Data analysis focused on teachers' views about these reading assessments and how they use the data to guide instruction. Results suggested that lack of training and professional development lead to the use of only one data source when making instructional decisions.

Keywords: Reading assessments, Developmental Reading Assessment, Scholastic Reading Inventory, data-driven instruction, professional development, professional learning communities

Introduction

During partner reading time, Tucker, a first-grade student, continuously chose the same book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* After a few days I began to wonder, "Is he choosing this book, because he has an interest in animals? Is he choosing this book, because he has memorized the words? Is he choosing it, because it's easy for him to read and he is embarrassed to read to his friends?" Tucker has struggled with his emergent literacy skills since he entered pre-kindergarten and was held back in kindergarten for this reason. As a new teacher, there were many questions that arose as I pondered the idea of different types of reading assessments and how they could help me better understand Tucker's challenges as a reader.

Throughout my experiences as an elementary teacher, I have witnessed the use of many different reading assessments. I have administered paper-based assessments in first grade through fifth grade, such as Pearson's (2017) Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and Hienemann's (2016) Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS). My experience also includes administering computer-based assessments, such as Renaissance's (2017) STAR 360 Reading Assessment and Accelerated Reader. After reflecting on these experiences, I wonder what the assessments tell me about a student and how I might utilize the data to further foster the child's reading achievement.

Currently, I am working in a rural school district with fifth and sixth-grade students. My position has me working closely with the literacy specialist and with the students who meet with her on a regular basis. Some students who struggle with early literacy skills have caused me to consider whether this could be an effect of their previous literacy instruction. The students in fifth and sixth grade in the district take Scholastic's (2014) Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Once their scores have been collected and

analyzed, those students who score below benchmark receive the DRA2 assessment. Although I was unable to observe the students during the SRI, after observing some of the students during their DRA2 assessments, I became interested in interviewing the literacy specialist and classroom teachers about their understandings of the reading process, and how they use the data collected from both assessments.

Reflecting upon my past experiences with reading assessments, I am drawn to my long-term experience in first grade. I administered the DRA2 and STAR assessments, using the information in different ways. One thing that I found to be interesting was the difference in students' performances on each assessment. One student, in particular, scored very differently on the STAR assessment than he did on the DRA2 assessment. The STAR assessment data gave suggestions for further instruction, but I found them to be broad. Using the DRA2 assessment, I was able to pinpoint the child's strengths and areas of concern, to help focus my instruction based on his literacy needs. A fascinating finding, which dealt specifically with his performance on the STAR assessment, was that there were areas of literacy in which he scored low during the STAR assessment; however, he scored average/proficient during the DRA2 assessment. In his parent-teacher conference, his mother expressed her concern with his performance on the STAR assessment. I was able to show her data from the STAR assessment and the DRA2 assessment. Together, we questioned why he was scoring differently on these assessments. There were many reasons that were discussed. One reason was his age and ability to operate the computer; whereas, another reason was his comprehension during the timed test. These areas will be part of my focus as I conduct my study.

Reading assessments are used to identify students' strengths and those at risk for future academic failure. Classroom teachers and literacy specialists need access to effective reading

assessments to target students' strengths and needs to be able to provide additional support where it is needed. Klingbeil, McComas, Burns, and Helman (2015) analyzed and discussed screening measures by focusing on both practical characteristics and psychometric characteristics of universal screenings. Reading assessments should be reliable, but educators also need to be accountable for how they use the information that they receive from these assessments. According to Olinghouse, Lambert, and Compton (2006), using multiple assessments that are specific to certain reading skills will allow for the educator to identify an accurate starting point for interventions, and to determine whether the student has acquired the targeted reading skill from his/her previous instruction.

Topic and Research Problem

There are many students who continue their education, still struggling with literacy skills. It is imperative for school districts to select multiple measures of reading assessments to support struggling readers, and intervene, when necessary. Reading assessments provide authentic information to teachers that help identify strengths, and areas of need, for young readers. It is at the discretion of administrators and teachers to choose which assessments best identify these qualities. There are many aspects of reading that should be examined and assessed, and educators need to determine which reading assessments will accurately determine strengths and needs.

In 1986, Beaver (2002) developed the *Developmental Reading Assessment* (DRA2) in response to the U.S. Department of Education's publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which brought attention to the reading ability of American students. The DRA2 allows for the assessment of oral language, comprehension, and fluency. This is a one-on-one assessment that allows educators to make decisions about the

student's reading proficiency, and whether he or she may be at risk for future academic failure. The *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI) was developed by Scholastic Inc. as a measurement to assess students' reading ability. The SRI is a computer-adaptive assessment tool that measures students' comprehension of varying text difficulties, based on the Lexile Framework for Reading (Scholastic Inc., 2014). This computer-adaptive assessment requires the students to work independently, without any assistance from the instructor, focusing on students' comprehension and other reading skills.

Data-driven instruction is also crucial and meaningful. Many teachers are required to administer certain assessments, but the information gathered is not beneficial to the teachers and students if the data are not being used accurately. Abbott and Wren (2016) argued that valuable data-driven instruction needs a clear focus and strategic plan for decision-making.

Rationale

My experiences, as a substitute teacher in many school districts and capacities, which include numerous classrooms from kindergarten to sixth grade, have led me to the notion of examining reading assessments and their effectiveness throughout various settings and scenarios. Reading assessments serve as essential tools for collecting data. The decisions that educators make with the data can also be extremely beneficial to improving educational pedagogy and student academic achievement. It is imperative that appropriate, reliable, and valid reading assessments are used in school districts to pinpoint students' literacy needs. As a result of my research, I have compared the reading assessments used in my current school, and explored decisions that are made in regard to at-risk readers, which, in the future, will benefit my teaching endeavors.

From childhood to adulthood, reading skills are the foundation of learning. The use of reading assessments in education has been a growing concern for school districts. High-stakes, mandated test results are at the forefront of administrative decisions, regarding which formative reading assessments are reliable and provide accurate information for quality instruction throughout the year. According to Abbott and Wren (2016), "only 26 percent of over 10,000 elementary, middle, and high school teachers surveyed, indicated that standardized test results accurately reflect student achievement" (p. 38). With the growing amount eligible test takers opting out of mandated standardized tests, it is vital for administration to choose ongoing, formative reading assessments that will improve both student academic achievement and instruction.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to compare two reading assessments, through the examination of the different components of each assessment. After both reading assessments were compared, in terms of what information they provide about young readers, student data was studied, to discuss with teachers their next steps in the process of making data-driven decisions. Klingbeil et al. (2015) believe that using multiple measures of assessment provides the most accurate information when making instructional decisions. No reading assessment is completely accurate on its own. Students need to be assessed in multiple ways. A student who is identified as at-risk in one assessment should be further assessed using a more targeted assessment. The more specific the data, the more beneficial the instruction will be for the child. According to L'Allier (2013), the use of one reading assessment does not give sufficient data or evidence to determine a student's strengths and needs, or to give specific instructional recommendations. It is my hope to enhance my knowledge of reading assessments and data-driven instruction, while

also encouraging the educators whom I will be working with, to take a deeper look into their teaching philosophies and teaching strategies that most benefit their students.

Research Questions

- *What areas are the foci of Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) assessments?*
    - *How does each tool assess comprehension and the process of reading?*
- *How do the SRI and the DRA2 compare in terms of the information that they provide about readers?*
    - *What does the information provided by the assessment tool say about individual students as readers?*
    - *How do teachers and literacy specialists use data to drive their instruction?*

Review of Literature

This literature review will summarize key points of the reading process that are the focus of multiple measures of reading assessments. Much research can be found on differing reading assessments and how they relate to assessing student reading ability and comprehension. A theoretical framework will also be developed throughout the literature review. Along with these aspects of the reading process, the literature review will also summarize the notion of data-driven instruction and its benefits for educators and students.

Scholastic Reading Inventory

Scholastic Inc. (2014), developed the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), which is a computer-based reading measure used to assess students' reading ability and reading comprehension level. The original version of the SRI was created in 1998 as a print version, but

the computer-based version was launched a year later (Scholastic Inc., 2014). There are two subtests within the SRI: the Foundational Reading Assessment, which was designed to assess early literacy skills, and the Reading Comprehension Assessment, which is used to assess reading comprehension. The Foundational Reading Assessment is targeted toward students in grades K-2, as they build their literacy skills in the areas of phonological awareness, letter-sound identification, letter-word identification, decoding, and word recognition. The Reading Comprehension Assessment's target audience is students in grade 1-12 as they develop their comprehension skills. The assessment consists of 20-30 questions, based on passages from both fictional and nonfictional children's literature, chosen from the test bank. The test bank includes over 4,500 questions, making the test unique each time it is taken. The questions are either fill-in-the-blank, or cloze questions, which are similar to those found in standardized, state tests (Algozzine, Wang, & Boukhtiarov, 2011).

Although there is limited research specific to the SRI, Algozzine, Wang, and Boukhtiarov (2011) examined the SRI along with other reading assessments. The researchers analyzed STAR Reading and the SRI assessments, to determine if both assessments were useful in predicting end-of-year achievement on state mandated tests. Both the SRI and STAR Reading were used as progress monitoring tools, and the researchers found that the SRI was a "good predictor of end-of-year achievement in grades 6, 7, and 8" (p. 16). Algozzine, Wang, and Boukhtiarov (2011) compared standardized coefficients and partial correlation coefficients to determine which would be the best predictor. Test results prove there were slight increases in scores, when these assessments were frequently used. The study also shows that both the SRI and STAR reading were good predictors for end-of-year achievement; however, the assessments should be used in conjunction with one another. Algozzine, Wang, and Boukhtiarov (2011), came to the

conclusion that "teachers need other performance indicators related to statewide tests that are available more frequently so that instructional programs can be improved in a timely fashion" (p. 15). The SRI's Reading Comprehension Assessment is grounded in the Lexile Framework for Reading (Scholastic Inc., 2014). This study only focuses on the Reading Comprehension Assessment portion of the SRI.

The Lexile Framework for Reading. The ability to comprehend text relies on multiple factors; including, but not limited to, the reader's ability and the text's complexity. According to Stenner, Sanford, and Burdick (2006), the Lexile Framework for Reading is based on the Rasch model, an item response theory, which analyzes both reader ability and text complexity, as they relate to the model's developmental scale. The Rasch scale determines reading difficulties based on theory, rather than on experience. The Rasch model assumes that when the reader's ability increases then the item difficulty increases, as well. The reader's Lexile level is determined when they reach a 75% comprehension rate (Scholastic Inc., 2014).

The Lexile Framework for Reading was created by Smith III and a team at MetaMetrics (Harvey, 2011). In an interview, Smith discussed two types of Lexile measure: the reader measure and the text measure. The reader measure identifies the reader's ability, according to the outcome of the reading comprehension test. The text measure identifies the complexity of the text.

According to Swartz, Burdick, Hanlon, Stenner, Kyngdon, Burdick, and Smith (2014), reading ability includes skills, such as: making connections and comparisons, referring to details in the text, and drawing conclusions. Student reading ability is determined by the mean, or average, of a group of items, within the reading assessment, analyzed as a whole, rather than individually (Swartz et al., 2014). There are uncertainties when it comes to determining

comprehension based on reader ability and text complexity. Identifying reader ability is based on empirical circumstances; whereas, text complexity is identified and grounded in theory.

Text complexity is determined by two elements: the semantic element, and the syntactic element, within the text (Stenner et al., 2006; Swartz et al., 2014). The semantic element refers to units, or words, found within a text, that are familiar to the reader allowing the reader to make meaning of the text. For younger students, this may include the frequency of sight words. For older students, this may include content vocabulary words. The syntactic element refers to sentence length and complexity as it relates to the level of difficulty that the reader has in comprehending the text (Stenner et al., 2006). Lexile levels are produced by using a readability formula that analyzes semantic and syntactic data. Lexile scores range from 0L (beginning reader) to 2000L (advanced reader) (Hiebert, 2011). Hiebert (2011) addresses one problem with readability formulas. Short sentences (syntax) and frequent, familiar words (semantics) do not always result in high levels of comprehension. After reviewing the studies by Stenner et al. (2006), Swartz et al. (2014), and Hiebert (2011), it is clear that comprehension rates rely on text accuracy, semantic units and syntactic structure, and reader reliability, according to the level of individual reader ability.

Developmental Reading Assessment

According to Pearson Education Inc. (2011), the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) is a standardized-based assessment that measures multiple aspects of reading, including reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. The main purposes of the DRA2 are to identify reading skills, and document student growth. The assessment is broken up into four sections, reading engagement, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and teacher observation guide.

Reading Engagement. The first section is a student reading survey, which assesses the students' interests and engagement when it comes to reading. The student reading survey specifically addresses the student's reading habits, and how that student views himself or herself as a reader. According to Luyten, Peschar, & Coe (2008), reading engagement and motivation are the core of literacy learning and are crucial for academic success.

Oral Reading Fluency. The second section is a one-on-one reading conference between the student and the teacher. The oral reading fluency section, similar to a Reading Record (Clay, 2001), allows the teacher to observe, and document, students' reading behaviors, as they interact with a text. Oral reading fluency is used to measure a student's expression, accuracy, and rate while reading a selected text for a certain amount of time (Olinghouse et al., 2006). Oral miscues and/or self-corrections are recorded and coded. The teacher's focus is on omissions, repetitions, insertions, substitution, hesitations, and self-corrections (Wu, Wu, & Lu, 2014). The student's self-regulation skills are assessed during this time. When a student is reading to a teacher during a DRA2, the teacher is able to hear the student's miscues to determine whether he/she is using meaning, syntax, or visual cues to make the miscue or to self-correct the miscue.

Reading Comprehension. The third section is an independent section, wherein the student answers questions about the text. The student is asked to write a summary of the text, including story elements, such as characters and the plot of the story. The questions include literal comprehension, interpretive and metacognitive awareness questions. According to Johnson and Keier (2010), reading comprehension is the meaning-making process that the reader engages in when interacting with a text. During and after reading, students need to make connections, draw inferences, question, and visualize as they read, to better understand the text. How students build their own interpretations of new information is an example of constructivism

(Johnson & Keir, 2010). Constructivist theory explains how students internalize what they read, combine it with their active schema, and create new understandings. This type of comprehension is shown by the way students summarize, synthesize, and evaluate the text.

Two measures of comprehension, that are included in most reading assessments, are retelling and comprehension questions. Afflerbach (2012) discusses both aspects of comprehension in his book *Understand and Using Reading Assessments, K-12.* When students are retelling what they have read, they chose their own vocabulary or the vocabulary that they have acquired from the text to recall what they remember. Many reading assessments include a retelling checklist, such as the one included in the DRA2, to analyze the student's level of understanding through retelling. Comprehension questions include questions about main idea and details and focus on literal or inferential comprehension (Afflerbach, 2012). When considering the quality of comprehension skills as children develop, Foster and Miller (2007) draw attention to the terms *learning to read* and *reading to learn.* The term *reading to learn* focuses on the strategies that students need to comprehend the texts that they are reading. For academic achievement, it is crucial that students learn comprehension strategies that they can use and transfer among content areas.

Teacher Observation Guide. Finally, the fourth section includes a Teacher Observation Guide, wherein the teacher analyzes data collected to find strengths and areas that need further instruction and/or intervention. The data should be used to address specific reading strategies that are developmentally appropriate for each student.

Research shows that the DRA2 can be a reliable predictor of future academic achievement, when used, appropriately, by classroom teachers and literacy specialists. Burgin and Hughes (2009) studied the use of the DRA2 as a summative assessment, during a summer

literacy program. The researchers found that teachers were spending roughly thirty minutes to score and assess each student, during this time they examined authentic data specific to the individual child's strengths and weaknesses. Burgin and Hughes (2009) came to the conclusion that the DRA2 "has a more rigorous approach" (p. 33) when measuring the mechanics of reading, comprehension, and making instructional decisions.

Along with Burgin and Hughes, Paris and Hoffman (2004) stated similar results. The researchers investigated reading assessment through multiple study groups. One study asked teachers to take a survey in regard to the availability of reading assessments and their experience with the reading assessments. A second study included the administration and analysis of the available reading assessments (DRA2). Finally, a study was conducted to observe the professional development and training that was provided to teachers, on reading assessments. Paris and Hoffman (2004) found that the DRA2's oral reading fluency and comprehension sections are "most informative about children's reading during initial skill development" (p. 207). The DRA2 provides valuable information in regard to student's fluent oral reading, vocabulary knowledge, phonological awareness, and ability to process text complexity (Paris & Hoffman, 2004). Although teachers seemed comfortable with the reading assessment they were administering, "the teachers require sustained professional development and school-wide implementation of reading assessment to use them uniformly, consistently, and wisely" (Paris & Hoffman, 2004, p. 207). Both Paris and Hoffman (2004), and Burgin and Hughes (2009) agree that the DRA2 is a reliable predictor of future academic achievement, and supports instructional decision making.

Data-Driven Instruction

When it comes to making instructional decisions, educators need multiple areas of feedback based on the child. Vygotsky's Theory of Social Constructivism can be linked to data-driven instruction and decision-making. In order to collect data to drive instruction, the teacher observes the student, assists the student in specific learning targets, encourages self-evaluation, and provides opportunities for independent practice. By using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Theory (Johnson & Keier, 2010), the teacher can model the skill or strategy, then engage the student in authentic, guided practice that incorporates appropriate scaffolding, and finally allow time for the student to work independently to practice the skill or strategy.

L'Allier (2013) studied a group of certified teachers enrolled in a literacy education master's degree program, and how they used these data they collected to make instructional recommendations. L'Allier (2013) found that although the teachers were correctly collecting and analyzing data, they were lacking appropriate recommendations. When giving recommendations intended for instructional use, data should be analyzed and specific strategies should be stated in the recommendation.

Children need to be taught how to read and think about what they are reading; in the classroom, this would be in the form of comprehension strategies. Comprehension strategies can be explicitly taught or can be taught through Vygotsky's theory of Zone of Proximal Development (Johnson & Keier, 2010). A child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) includes the skills and strategies that he/she can learn with the assistance of the teacher. When working within the child's ZPD, the child has the most potential for successful learning. Students need explicit modeling of comprehension strategies and how they can use these strategies as they read to understand a text (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, & Pearson, 1991). Through

modeling and authentic vocabulary, students will increase their ability to use different comprehension strategies, according to the types of text they are reading. Through the use of reading assessments, teachers are able to distinguish which comprehension strategies the student has mastered, and which strategies the student needs further instruction and practice with. Once this information is collected, teachers are able to choose which instructional strategies, and type of scaffolding will work best according to the student's ZPD and his/her needs. According to Algozzine, Wang, and Boukhtiarov (2011) teachers use reading assessments to provide individualized instruction to students; for example, "based on student's performance, a teacher may increase the amount and type of instruction, slow the pace of it, or change methods of teaching completely" (p. 4).

According to Dorn & Jones (2012), teacher collaboration is vital to data decision-making and data-driven instruction. When teachers collaborate, they are able to discuss data that has been collected. Professional learning communities (PLCs), are powerful tools that can be used by educators to help them continue to learn and grow professionally (Abbott & Wren, 2016). The intended use of PLCs is to focus on educators as learners, and to encourage the use of best practices in regard to instructional planning and assessment.

In the classroom, the goal is for students to learn the reading process, which includes comprehension, and for teachers to use authentic instructional approaches to target student needs. The SRI and DRA2 are grounded in theories such as the Lexile framework for reading and the constructivism theory. Reading assessments are important to the world of education. Students are able to take responsibility for their learning and growth through setting goals and working to achieve them. Teachers use reading assessments as a progress monitoring tool to track students' growth throughout the year. Students who develop reading strategies and are aware of the

reading process will find success as they begin to think more deeply about the texts that they are reading.

Methodology

This study will focus on two types of reading assessments, computer-based and paper-based assessments, which are frequently used in the intermediate (fifth and sixth grade) classrooms. A closer look at the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) will occur to determine which areas of the reading process are assessed by each. Along with this examination, the classroom teachers and the literacy specialist will be interviewed in order to learn what they consider to be important when collecting data from these assessments and how they use the data to drive their instruction.

Setting and Participants

My research study took place in a rural school district called Mission Elementary School (all names for places and people are pseudonyms). Mission Elementary is located roughly forty minutes from the nearest city and is populated by mostly Caucasian, working, middle-class families. Mission Elementary is one of three elementary schools in the district. The district also has one middle school and one high school. Mission Elementary is a unique school that includes multi-grade classrooms. This means that each classroom teacher has a combination of students from two grade levels. Their classrooms include kindergarten, primary (which consists of first and second-grade students), elementary (which consists of third and fourth-grade students), and finally, intermediate (which consists of fifth and sixth-grade students).

According to the New York State Department of Education (2016), for the 2016-2017 school year, Mission Elementary has a total of 436 students. Of those 436 students, roughly 86% are White, 5% are Hispanic, less than 1% is African-American, and 6% are Multiracial. In terms

of gender, just over 50% are male and just under 50% are female. Roughly 20% of the student population qualifies for free lunch and 4% qualifies for reduced lunch. The student population is also predominately English language speakers.

The adult participants include the intermediate teachers, one reading specialist, and one special education teacher. These teachers have participated in many trainings and professional developments on the assessments and data-driven instruction.

Positionality

As the sole teacher-researcher of this study, my demographics are important to consider when determining the lens in which I explore my research study. I am a Caucasian woman, in my late twenties, from a working, middle-class family. Although I was not raised in the school district that is part of this study, I did grow up in a rural town that is very similar to this school district. Both of my parents have earned their Master's degrees in education from Niagara University and Buffalo State. They are also both teachers in the school district that I attended. My mother is an elementary teacher and my father is a high school CAD teacher. Having a background related to education and teaching, I have an internal perspective on the world of education. I am working toward my Master's degree in literacy, and spent four days a week at Mission Elementary School. This allowed me to become familiar with the educators, students, and curriculum, as I developed my research study.

Methods of Data Collection

This is a qualitative research study that explored and analyzed both the SRI and the DRA2 assessment tools. A qualitative research study consists of observations and interviews as a means to better understand a specific topic (Clark & Creswell, 2015). Data were collected over a four week period. The adult participants engaged in an anonymous, online survey, based on

their experiences and knowledge of reading assessments and data-driven instruction. The survey was open for 3-4 weeks so the teachers were able to complete the survey at their earliest convenience. Following the survey, three adult participants, two classroom teachers, and one literacy specialist, were interviewed and asked to provide student data, with names removed. These questions are based on their literacy instruction, their knowledge of the reading assessments that they use, and how they use the data from each reading assessment. Each interview was conducted separately and audio-recorded. This ensured the interview was relaxed and more conversation-like.

A content analysis of each reading assessment was also completed, to understand the focus of each reading assessment. This part of the research study included a deeper look into the two reading assessments, by exploring the teacher manuals and by browsing the online database of teacher resources. After investigating the background of both the DRA2 and the SRI reading assessments, I was able to identify how each assessment describes an individual student as a reader.

Procedures

Data collected for this study supports a qualitative research study, based on my exploration of both the Developmental Reading Assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory, and my investigation of teachers' attitudes toward both reading assessments. First, I began my study by examining the two assessments, the SRI and the DRA2, and completed the content analysis. This step was an important part of my process because it helped me to become more familiar with both reading assessments. It was essential to have the background knowledge on both assessments before I conducted the interviews. A sample of both assessments is attached: the SRI (Appendix A) and the DRA2 (Appendix B). Following the content analysis, an

online survey was made available to the adult participants, using the predetermined questions (Appendix C). Once the surveys were completed, I interviewed two classroom teachers using a chart created to gather specific information (Appendix D). Again, these interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed onto my computer.

Once my data were collected, I began to analyze the surveys and interviews by using multiple methods of analysis discussed by Clark and Creswell (2015), and Shagoury and Power (2012). As the surveys came in, I begin my initial analysis. I read through each carefully, highlighted important information, annotated each response, and wrote reflective notes in the margins. This helped to keep my thought process clear, as I looked at multiple surveys. Finally, when all of the surveys were collected, I scanned through each survey and created a list of repetitive words and phrases to help find themes, and to form my findings. I also made note of my wonderings, to ask follow up questions during my interviews.

My next step in the analysis process was to transcribe each interview. Once the interviews were transcribed, I began the coding process (Clark & Creswell, 2015). According to Clark and Creswell (2015), "Coding is a procedure where a researcher identifies segments of text, places a bracket around them or highlights them, and assigns a code that describes the meaning of the text segment" (p. 359). I color coded responses according to my interview questions. To code my data, I color-coding each survey and interview, based on each research question and sub-question. I used my list of repetitive words/phrases to code my data into different categories: attitude and ability, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, level/score, grouping, analyzing, and training. Each category was assigned a color, and I color-coded both the surveys and the interview transcriptions. I also used constant comparison

(Shagoury & Power, 2012), as another analysis method to compare the survey data to the interview transcriptions and student data. These codes help me to develop my findings.

To attest the trustworthiness of this study, and to insure that it is reliable and valid, to the best of my ability, I found common themes throughout my data and use the strategy of triangulation to determine my findings (Clark & Creswell, 2015). I accomplished this by collecting several forms of data, from different adult participants. I also practiced member checking as a strategy, by following up with the adult participants of this study to check the accuracy of my analysis and findings (Clark & Creswell, 2015).

Data Analysis

The purpose of my study was to examine and compare two reading assessments, SRI and DRA2, and to learn how teachers analyze the assessments to make data-driven decisions. By comparing both reading assessments and interviewing the teachers who use the assessments throughout the year, I was able to develop themes and findings that answered my research questions.

After reviewing both reading assessments, I developed these findings: (1) Both the DRA2 and the SRI focus on reading comprehension, but the DRA2 focuses on oral reading fluency first, then comprehension. (2) The DRA2 provides more specific information about students, needed for data-driven instruction. (3) Teachers lack the appropriate training and opportunity to use multiple measures of reading assessments. (4) Teachers have found the DRA2 to be more valuable and accurate than the SRI, when it comes to the type of information provided by both assessments. (5) The DRA2 provides more specific information that can be used for future instructional purposes.

Finding One: Both the DRA2 and the SRI focus on reading comprehension, but the DRA2 focuses on oral reading fluency first, then comprehension.

Through my teacher questionnaire, the intermediate teachers explained their process of analyzing the DRA2. The student's oral miscues and written responses to comprehension questions are individually analyzed by the classroom teacher. The student's oral reading fluency and comprehension are evaluated by using the Continuum Rubric. The Continuum Rubric includes a series of descriptors that reflects a range of responses. Each section of the rubric contains four categories: *Intervention, Instructional, Independent, and Advanced.* According to the *DRA2 Teacher Guide: 4-8* (Beaver & Carter, 2006) the Intervention descriptors indicate that the student lacks the appropriate strategies or skills to develop an acceptable response; the Instructional descriptors indicate that the student shows some understanding of the text and how to answer the questions; the Independent descriptors indicate the student is capable of comprehending and responding at that text level; and the Advanced descriptors suggest that the student is performing at a high level of oral reading fluency and comprehension skills. The students are scored on each part of the rubric, from 1 (intervention) to 4 (advanced). The areas of oral reading fluency scored are *expression*, *phrasing*, *rate*, and *accuracy*, and the areas of comprehension scored are *questioning*/*prediction*, *summary*, *literal comprehension*, *interpretation*, *reflection*, and *metacognitive awareness* (Pearson Education Inc., 2011). The use of the Continuum Rubric allows the teacher to gain a holistic view of the student's literacy capabilities.

Although there is an additional section to the rubric titled *Reading Engagement*, the teachers explained they do not assess this through the DRA2; they assess students' engagement

with reading through the use of informal classroom observations. When asked, "*When completing the Continuum Rubric, do you complete the Reading Engagement section?"* One teacher explained, "No, I don't assess it (reading engagement) because at this point in time I can tell which of the students are engaged in reading, which ones are willing to find books on their own, and which ones need help." The DRA2 Reading Survey asks questions such as, "*List the books and other reading materials you have finished reading over the last couple of months," "What types of reading material (authors, topics, genres) do you like? Why?"* and *"What criteria do you use to select reading materials for independent reading?"* Multiple teachers described informal ways they get to know their students. At the start of each school year, the teachers ask each student to complete an interest survey. The interest survey includes questions about reading attitudes, reading interests, personal interests, and motivation. The teachers are able to learn a lot of about each student through this type of informal assessment.

The DRA2 assesses the student's ability to decode and self-monitor using the cueing system, oral reading rate (words per minute), and level of expression (Beaver & Carter, 2006). Oral reading fluency is determined through the student's oral reading behaviors, accuracy and rate. Accuracy is scored by the number of miscues the student makes during the running record. An oral miscue can include a substitution, omission, insertion, and reversal. Rate includes the time it took the student to read the portion of the book, stopping at the asterisk. The oral reading time is used to determine the words per minute (WPM).

Level 38	Percent of Accuracy	Number of Miscues
Intervention	94% or less	12 or more
Instructional	95%	10-11
Independent	96-98%	4-8
Advanced	99-100%	3 or less

Figure 1: Developmental Reading Assessment: Level 38 Accuracy

Level 40, 50, 60	Percent of Accuracy	Numbers of miscues
Intervention	95% or less	12 or more
Instructional	96%	9-11
Independent	97-98%	4-8
Advanced	99-100%	3 or less

Figure 2: Developmental Reading Assessment: Level 40, 50, 60 Accuracy

Figures 1 and 2 are examples of the Oral Reading Percent of Accuracy chart, included in each DRA form. As shown, the percentages differ slightly, at the Intervention, Instructional, and Independent range, from level 38 (third-grade) to levels 40, 50, and 60 (fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade). According to the DRA2 and the Percent of Accuracy chart, accuracy is determined only by the number of miscues the student made and does not take into consideration the type of miscue that is made. Later in the form, there is a section titled *Teacher Analysis,* which allows the teacher to take a closer look at the student's miscues. The teacher is to use the information

recorded during the oral reading fluency to complete the *Teacher Analysis* chart. The first section of the chart is based on the student's reading behavior. It asks teachers to record how the student problem-solves words during reading: blending letter sounds, letter-sound clusters, onset and rime, knowledge of spelling patterns, syllables, rereading, or no observable behaviors (Pearson Education Inc., 2011). Next, the teacher is asked to determine whether the miscues made interfered with meaning: never, at times, or often. The next section includes the type of miscue: omissions, insertions, reversals, or substitutions that were either visually similar or not visually similar. The final section includes recording substitutions to analyze student's attention to visual information. As stated earlier, the information recorded in the *Teacher Analysis* chart is not used to determine the student's overall oral reading fluency; the information that determines the student's overall oral reading fluency is *expression*, *phrasing*, *rate*, and *accuracy*.

The teachers explained spending more time analyzing oral reading fluency, because according to the DRA2 if the student does not fall within the independent range for oral reading fluency, they should not move on to the comprehension section. One teacher stated, "Although comprehension is very important at the intermediate level, we as teachers need to assess our students' oral reading first. If we have students who struggle with decoding and self-monitoring when reading then those students will also struggle with comprehension." All seven teachers spoke on this topic and believe oral reading and comprehension go hand-in-hand. At the intermediate level, the students are expected to read independently and to create meaning when reading. The teachers believe when reading independently it is difficult to have strong comprehension if oral reading fluency skills are lacking.

The DRA2 asks teachers to evaluate the student's comprehension skills and strategies through their performance of the following:

- Make predictions
- Generate questions
- Understand the text
- Think beyond the literal level
- Determine the important ideas in a text
- Support their thoughts with details from the text
- Develop an awareness of the strategies they use to construct and monitor meaning

(Beaver & Carter, 2006, p.68)

The written portion of the DRA2 allows the student to organize and express his/her understanding of the text. The Comprehension questions encourage the student to think deeper and more critically about what he/she read and to communicate his/her thoughts in the form of a written response. The student booklet is organized in two sections. The first portions, titled "Before Reading" lets the student read a short passage and asks the student to make predictions and to question what will happen next in the story. The next portion, titled "After Reading" has the student finish reading the text and complete the follow-up comprehension questions. When predicting and questioning, to earn an Independent score, the student needs to provide at least two questions and predictions that are practical and go beyond the text. The teacher assesses the student's knowledge of text structures, use of background knowledge, book title, and the initial passage to make predictions and questions concerning the remainder of the text.

Once the "Before Reading" portion is complete, the student is asked to read the entire text, independently. The student then moves to the "After Reading" portion to write a summary,

and answer literal comprehension, interpretation, reflection and metacognitive awareness questions (Pearson Education Inc., 2011). In the summary, the student is encouraged to use his/her own words, and to include any important characters, events, and details that will support their response. To earn an Independent score, the student's summary needs to be in his/her own language (not copied directly from the text) include many key ideas, some vocabulary and supporting details from each section of the text. The literal comprehension section is presented in the form of a question or a prompt; this is where the student shows his/her knowledge and understanding of how to pull explicit information from the text to support his/her thoughts. To earn an Independent score, the student must accurately respond to the question/prompt using information from the text. The literal comprehension section is difficult for teachers to score; this is where the rubric is helpful. If the student uses partial information from the text and/or includes a misinterpretation, the student would earn an Instructional score. The interpretation section is meant to challenge the student's critical thinking skills and think beyond the text; the student is also encouraged to use information from the text to support his/her thinking. To earn an Independent score, the student needs to understand important text implications and make connections to supporting details from the text. The reflection section asks the student to think deeply about what he/she has read and reflect on a significant portion of the text. To earn an Independent score, the student must state the significant message from the text and draw attention to specific information from the text that supports his/her opinion. Finally, the metacognitive awareness section assesses the student's understanding and use of different reading strategies throughout the text. To earn an Independent score, the student needs to identify at least one reading strategy used during reading, and include an example from the text that showed how he/she used the specific strategy.

The Continuum Rubric allows for a closer look at all sections of the assessment. The teacher can then select and circle descriptors that reflect the student's performance. Once each descriptor is circled, the teacher totals each part of the comprehension section to calculate the student's overall comprehension score and determine which category the student falls in, *Intervention*, *Instructional*, *Independent*, or *Advanced*.

Through my exploration of the SRI, I was able to find different reports that can be accessed through the Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM), on the SRI website (Scholastic Reading Inventory, 2008), but the teachers had not been trained on how to access this information. The questionnaire responses also explain a lot about the knowledge the teachers have regarding the SRI. One hundred percent of responses stated that the SRI assesses comprehension skills, however the teachers are unaware which of the skills were actually being assessed. The teachers also expressed a lack of knowing which skills the students have mastered and which skills the students need additional support with. The SRI assesses comprehension skills such as identifying details, cause-and-effect relationships, the sequence of events, making comparisons, and drawing conclusions. These skills are assessed in the form of multiple choice questions. The student reads a short passage then is asked to answer a question based on the passage he/she just read. Vocabulary is also assessed, but according to the SRI, assessment of vocabulary is done within the context of the passage and requires no background knowledge (Scholastic Inc., 2014). SAM provides access to each test the student has taken and which questions the students got correct; unfortunately, the teachers surveyed were unaware of this feature, therefore, they do not use it to their benefit.

After looking further into the SRI, specifically SAM, I found there are many useful reports that can be used by teachers, following the completion of the assessment. If the teacher

would like to find the student's current reading level, the Reading Performance Report provided a graph with all the students' scores and standings in the class. The teacher can access an individual student's test history through the Student Progress Report, which includes a summary of SRI testing activity. If the teacher is curious about students who need additional intervention services, the Intervention Grouping Report can identify those students who need additional support. Finally, the Proficiency Growth Report provides an overview of Lexile score changes over a period of time, for an individual student or for the whole class. These reports range in type from progress monitoring, management, and instructional planning, regarding the type of information each report provides. The Student Test Printout is another instructional planning report. It can be used when conferencing with a student about their performance or as a tool to model and practice a specific skill or strategy the student needs to work on. The Parent Report could also be beneficial to teachers. It provides an introduction of the SRI, a summary of the student's performance on the assessment, and suggestions to help and encourage the student when developing fundamental reading skills at home and in school.

Finding Two: The DRA2 provides more specific information about students, needed for data-driven instruction.

To get a deeper look into how the teachers use the information provided by the assessments for instructional purposes, I interviewed two intermediate classroom teachers. Prior to meeting with each teacher, I asked them to think about both assessments they administer. I posed this question, "Do you have any students in your class that scored similarly or differently on both assessments?" With this question in mind, each teacher chose the data of two students to share during the interview. Surprisingly, both teachers chose one student who had similar results on both assessments and one student who had differing results on both assessments. Throughout

this section, I will describe both interviews and share my analysis of the teacher's thoughts about each student, in regard to the DRA2 and the SRI.

On March 16th, 2017, I met with Laura, who is one of the intermediate teachers at Mission Elementary. We began our conversation about the assessments that she uses in her classroom, both formally and informally. She explained her involvement with the DRA2, along with how she administers and analyzes the assessment. When asked to describe her process of administering the DRA2, Laura stated, "I select whether to give the student a fiction or nonfiction text." Laura also clarified that each level has both a fiction and nonfiction book, and the nonfiction book is usually a more difficult text. Next, Laura explained splitting the DRA2 form in half because "one section is for me (the teacher) to record information during the assessment, and the second section is the written response section, completed individually by the student." She gives the student a little information about the book and tells him/her to stop when they get to the asterisk. "While he is reading I make notes of his miscues and I time his reading. When he gets to the asterisk, I stop and record the time to use later when calculating his rate and accuracy." This score helps her determine if he scored instructional, independent, or advanced for the DRA2 level. Laura also explained that once the student stops at the asterisk, he is to complete the "Before Reading" portion of the student booklet, which includes predicting/questioning prompts. When this page is completed, Laura stated that the student reads the rest of text independently and uses the text to answer the comprehension questions. At this level there is no interaction between the student and the teacher, it is strictly a written portion and no prompting or additional questioning should be provided by the teacher.

Laura also explained her involvement with the SRI, or lack thereof. She explained, "Once the students have completed the assessment, a spreadsheet of the student data is sent to

me." Laura clarified that each student is given a Lexile score and the proficiency range for each grade level is provided in a chart at the bottom of the spreadsheet. "I am able to see what students are within the proficiency range for their grade, and if a student has fallen below their grade level proficiency range, I am able to see what grade level range their Lexile score falls in."

Laura shared with me the DRA2 assessment forms for two students in her class. Both students were very different readers, according to her classroom observations, the DRA2, and the SRI. Wayne and Brittany are both sixth-grade students, with different reading abilities and needs. Wayne had similar outcomes on both assessments; he scored significantly lower than the sixth-grade proficiency range. Wayne's results placed him in the third-grade proficiency range. Brittany had opposing outcomes on both assessments; she scored lower than the sixth-grade proficiency range on the SRI, but within range on the DRA2.

What you (teacher) say (classroom observations)	What DRA says (scores)	What SRI says (scores)
• Short attention span • Low motivation • Low interest • Low engagement • Choppy fluency	Instructional level: 38 Oral Reading Fluency: 10/16 (11-14) Comprehension: 14/24 (17-22)	Lexile level: 548

Figure 3: Wayne: Grade 6

First, Laura and I discussed Wayne. Laura explained her struggles with Wayne as a reader; "For him, the biggest thing we've had to overcome this year is his attention, his motivation, and his interest. His parents, OT, and I have different interventions in place to help him with his attention, to be able to do activities like sustained reading and writing." She has found that his attention and motivation are something that really hinders his reading; "he looks as

though he is engaged in reading, but he is not; most likely he is daydreaming." When asked to describe his comprehension and fluency when reading with Wayne during guided reading groups, Laura explained, "He has a difficult time comprehending what he's read because he has to be able to pay attention for long periods of time to gather information, and that's where I see his biggest downfall is. His fluency is pretty low, it's very choppy, and he repeats a lot of words when he's reading, sometimes he'll say the same sentence over and over again." To help with this issue, Laura works with Wayne on shorter texts so he does not have to pay attention for a long period of time, resulting in only having to sustain the information for a short period of time.

After skimming through Wayne's DRA2 assessment, I was interested in Laura's thoughts about his results, in regard to his fluency and comprehension. Laura explained, "For Wayne's fluency, he scored instructional in both the *words per minute (WPM)* section and the *percent of accuracy* section." *WPM* is determined by the time it took the student to read the passage, and *percent of accuracy* is determined by the number of miscues.

	Intervention	Instructional	Independent	Advanced
Minutes: Seconds	3:26 or more	3:25-2:27	2:26-1:49	1:48 or less
WPM	74 or less	75-104	105-140	141 or more

Figure 4: Wayne's Oral Reading Words per Minute Chart

	Intervention	Instructional	Independent	Advanced
# of Miscues	12 or more	9-11	7-8 4-6	0
% of Accuracy	95 or less	96	97 98	100

Figure 5: Wayne's Percent of Accuracy Chart

Wayne's oral reading behaviors included repetitions, omissions, insertions, and substitutions. His substitutions included '*weekend'* for '*week', 'we'* for '*he', 'turning'* for '*turned',* and '*talking'* for '*taking'*, which were all visually similar. While discussing these miscues with Laura, she identified these miscues as visual mistakes: "Wayne was not reading through the whole word at times, I could see that he was not paying attention to the ending of the words." We discussed her use of the Teacher Analysis section of the form. Laura explained that Wayne used rereading as a strategy to problem-solve words. She also added that at times Wayne's miscues interfered with the meaning of the text and that the majority of his miscues, four out of nine, were substitutions that were visually similar. Together we came to the conclusion that Wayne is using graphophonic cues (visual/phonics), rather than semantic cues (meaning) and syntactic cues (structure).

Laura uses the Continuum Rubric to score overall oral reading fluency. She described Wayne's oral reading behaviors as low; he scored a two for *expression* and a two for *phrasing*. "When he was reading he read a little higher than monotone; he did have some expression and it matched the text he was reading, but it wasn't consistent. He scored "inappropriate pauses and shorter phrases" because he would repeat himself quite frequently, which was his go-to. If he struggled with a word, he would go back to the beginning of the sentence and read it again."

When it came to Wayne's comprehension, he also scored low. Laura and I discussed the connection between reading fluency and comprehension. Laura stated, "Because Wayne's fluency is so low, he also has a difficult time understanding what he is reading. If students struggle with their oral reading fluency, their comprehension is going to be low also." This connection between oral reading fluency and comprehension is also an aspect of the DRA2. If students score below the appropriate range for oral reading fluency, they should not continue on

to the comprehension portion of the assessment; they should then be reassessed with a lower-level text. In Wayne's case, he scored just below the appropriate range to continue on to the comprehension portion, but Laura made the decision to continue on, to learn more about Wayne's comprehension skills. Wayne scored a three on *summary, literal comprehension,* and *metacognitive awareness;* he scored a two on *questioning/prediction,* and *reflection,* and he scored a 1 on *interpretation.* Overall, Wayne had reasonable written responses but they were very flat. Laura believes these results were a direct connection to Wayne's oral reading fluency ability. In response to Wayne's lack of comprehension, Laura explained her use of other resources to work on his comprehension. "In Wayne's guided reading group I like to use passages from Reading A-Z. I am able to find close reading passages which target comprehension, and we practice comprehension skills." Laura uses the Continuum Rubric to focus on the areas of comprehension he scored low on, such as interpretation, questioning/prediction, and reflection.

Grade Level	DRA Level (Independent Level)	SRI Lexile Levels (Proficiency Range)
3	30, 34, 38	520-820L
4	40	740-940L
5	50	830-1010L
6	60	925-1070L

Figure 6: Grade Level Equivalence

When it comes to the SRI assessment, Laura had very little information to share. Together, we evaluated the spreadsheet that is sent, once all students have completed the assessment. The students were ranked according to their Lexile score, and categorized by performance level: *advanced*, *proficient*, *basic*, and *below basic*. Laura explained, "The students' scores are not ranked by grade level, but by proficiency within their grade level." The purpose of the data given is to be used to target specific students who need additional support. Students, whose performance falls within the category of *basic* and *below basic*, are those who need additional support. Wayne received a Lexile score of 548. At the sixth grade level, his score should be between the proficiency ranges of 925-1070. Wayne's score is within the ranges of 520-820, which is at the third-grade proficiency level. Laura uses a Grade Level Equivalence chart similar to Figure 6 when comparing assessment scores from both the DRA2 and SRI, according to the student's grade level. When asked to share her thoughts about the SRI, Laura stated, "I can't see what type of comprehension questions the student missed, so really there is nothing to go off of. The Lexile score just tells me which students I need to give the DRA2. If a student falls below their proficiency range for their grade, then I have to give them a DRA2."

This statement began our discussion about Brittany. Laura explained that both times Brittany took the SRI she scored below the sixth-grade proficiency range. "Brittany should be reading between 925 and 1070 Lexile (sixth-grade), but she fell in the 856 range (fourth-grade). I felt this was an inaccurate score for her, so I wanted to prove she is a better reader than what her Lexile score says."

What you (teacher) say (classroom observations)	What DRA says (scores)	What SRI says (scores)
• Enjoys reading fiction • Independent • High engagement • Family support	Independent level: 60 Oral Reading Fluency: 15/16 (11-14) Comprehension: 22/24 (17-22)	Lexile level: 856

Figure 7: Brittany: Grade 6

Laura shared her classroom observations about Brittany as a reader. "She really enjoys reading; it's something she likes to do. She's the type of student who will do everything in her power to make sure it's interesting to her. Also, her reading engagement is really high." Brittany also has a support system at home that encourages reading. Laura explained that Brittany's family encourages her to read every night and to read to her younger siblings. "It's just an expectation in their house that she will read every night, and they will find something that she loves, and they will help support her any way they need to." Laura believes that family involvement is a huge factor that keeps Brittany on track in school.

Next, we discussed Brittany's performance on the DRA2. Brittany scored at the high level of oral reading fluency, and she's right at the tip of the comprehension range so she was almost advanced for this level of the DRA2. Laura explained, "Brittany did a really nice job with her fluency; you can tell she reads out loud a lot." Her rate was in the independent range, for both *WPM* and *Percent of Accuracy*. We also discussed Brittany's miscues, and how Laura uses this information for future instruction. When asked, "What conclusions can you make by looking at Brittany's miscues?" Laura stated, "When she had to pronounce *Pterygium*, she looked at her resources to figure out the pronunciation. Also, her only miscue was '*becomes'* for

‘*comes’*, but she still was able to understand the text and was reading for meaning.” At the intermediate level, the use of text features is a strategy the teachers encourage. Although Brittany made a visual miscue that she did not self-correct, she was able to make meaning of the text.

Laura then explained how she scored Brittany’s assessment, using the Continuum Rubric. Brittany scored high on both comprehension and oral reading fluency. Laura explained that because Brittany was timed while reading the selected passage from the book, she did not score fours on all aspects of oral reading fluency. “Brittany’s rate was slightly lower because her tone and expression are really good; she was being thoughtful and purposeful. I would have given her a four if it wasn’t for the timing part of the assessment.” I could see Laura’s frustration with this feature of the DRA2. Laura believes, that in some cases, how fast a student reads should not matter, as long as they are reading with appropriate tone and expression. Overall, Brittany performed well on the comprehension portion of the DRA2. She scored four on *literal comprehension, summary, interpretation,* and *metacognitive awareness,* and three on *questioning/prediction,* because she had undeveloped answers, and *reflection,* because she did not state her opinion. Laura’s explanation for these scores was, “[When predicting] she had very basic questions, similar questions, and a question that she already knew the answer to. She wasn’t able to develop questions that went beyond the text. [When reflecting] she restated the important message but does not give her own opinion. She was able to come up with the significant message but couldn’t explain why.”

In Brittany’s case, she seems like two different readers, in the eyes of the SRI and DRA2. I asked Laura if she was surprised with Brittany’s outcome on the DRA2. She replied,

> "No, this is what I see when I read with her, and when I listen to her, and when I ask her questions; these results reflect my classroom observations. Her SRI score made me nervous. The SRI score is what the district sees, and according to this, she is below where she should be. But by doing another reading assessment with her, I can make my own observations and assess her oral reading fluency and comprehension, to see she is where she should be in sixth grade."

I found Laura's response interesting, and it demonstrates the need for multiple reading assessments. For teachers to accurately assess their students reading skills, they should be using multiple means of assessments. It is also important for teachers to use assessments that will allow them to make observations about their students' reading ability, to make future instructional decisions.

Finding Three: Teachers lack the appropriate training and opportunity to use multiple measures of reading assessments.

On March 17th, 2017, I met with Barb, another intermediate teacher. Our discussion began with Evan, a sixth-grade student, who was also in her class last year. Barb described Evan as a quiet student, whose lack of reading ability impacts his performance in all subject areas. Barb stressed, "He has trouble problem solving on his own. If he can't read something his go-to is sitting next to someone who he knows will have the answer." Evan does not push himself in the classroom and tries to finish his work quickly, and puts in the least amount of effort. Barb explained, "Sometimes Evan tries, but he lacks the appropriate skills. He has big pockets of decoding issues; his oral reading fluency is so poor that it is almost impossible for him to have any comprehension." When asked why she believes his oral reading fluency is so low, Barb added, "Due to his poor attendance, he lacks literacy instruction and practice. I think he is a

smart kid; he just hasn't had a chance to be exposed to the curriculum." This is a great concern for Barb. She worries that he has made little to no progress throughout the past two years because he is missing so much instruction.

What you (teacher) say (classroom observations)	What DRA says (scores)	What SRI says (scores)
• Very quiet • Struggles to problem solve • Little to no skills • Decoding issues • Two grade levels behind • Frequently absent from school	Independent level: 38 Oral Reading Fluency: 11/16 (11-14) Comprehension: 18/24 (17-22) (4 months later) Instructional level: 40 Oral Reading Fluency: 10/16 (11-14) Comprehension: --/24	Lexile level: 507 Lexile level: 540

Figure 8: Evan: Grade 6

Barb described Evan's performance on the DRA2 in September, then again in January. She explained, "In September I assessed Evan at a level 38. He was on the lower end of the independent range for both oral reading fluency and comprehension. A few months later, I tried a level 40 with him. He was unable to complete the assessment in its entirety because he scored too low on the oral reading fluency." When discussing the comprehension portion of the DRA2, Barb expressed her struggles with Evan. His oral reading fluency score was very low so she hesitated to continue with the assessment. Unfortunately, because Evan has not made much progress, he has done every other book up to this level. Barb needed a cold read along with comprehension so she allowed Evan to continue. In cases like Evan, Barb is forced to use DRA2

books that Evan has already done before. Her hope is, that at some point, his oral reading fluency, at a level 40, would be strong enough to continue on to the comprehension portion. Unfortunately, another DRA2 on a book he has already read is not going to give her any new information about Evan as a reader.

Together, we examined Evan's oral reading performance. Barb shared her thoughts, in regard to how he scored and explained that oral reading fluency was Evan's biggest problem.

> "He guesses at words based on what they look like. It's almost like he looks at a word then goes through his head to see if he can find another word that matches what it looks like, instead of what it sounds like. So, he replaces words with other words that don't make sense, and he does not self-correct."

When asked to talk more about Evan's use of the cueing systems, Barb stated he does not read for meaning, because he makes too many miscues to create meaning. He also makes visual miscues because he does not have the skill to break multisyllabic words apart.

Next, we discussed his SRI scores from September and January. We noticed that his Lexile level confirmed what Barb has seen in the DRA2. In September, Evan had a Lexile score of 507, and in January he had a Lexile score of 540. Barb believes that if she were to administer the SRI again with Evan, he would most likely fall somewhere in between those scores. Evan's DRA2 level is 38 and Lexile level in the 500s, both scores fall in the third-grade range, well below where he should be.

Barb was asked to add any additional information, in regard to both assessments. Her response was, "I'm not exactly sure why we give the Lexile (SRI) because we are not using that data for anything other than to trigger whether or not to give a DRA2." Barb explained that the DRA2 gives her much more information, although it is not perfect. She goes on to say, "The

SRI score is what the district sees, and the DRA2 data is inputted if the student falls below the range of where they should be."

Barb believes the teachers need other measures of reading assessments, because of the lack of information, or access to information, with the SRI. More of Barb's frustrations stem from the SRI. "The SRI gives each student a number, but that's it. I don't know which type of comprehension or vocabulary questions they are missing, so I am unable to make instructional decisions with the SRI data." When asked if she could accurately group students by using their SRI score, she explained, "No, because I have no interaction with the student when they take the SRI. I have not heard them read, I don't know the questions they have answered, and I don't know what passages they have read. Every student in my class has different questions to different passages. It takes me, the teacher, completely out of the assessment; there is no human interaction at all."

This is cause for concern. Teachers in the district have expressed their concern about administering a reading assessment that not only gives them little information but that they have not been trained on. When asked, "*Do you feel you were properly trained to administer and analyze data from both assessments you use in your classroom?"* The responses included

- "I was not provided training to administer the SRI, but feel prepared administering it considering each student logs on independently and take the assessment on their personal device. I am, however, very curious about what the Lexile assesses and how I can use this information, which would require training."
- "We have asked for more training on the SRI but have not received it to date. Right now it seems that the district is focused on making sure we administer the SRI correctly

district wide. I imagine, in the future, there will be more discussion about how to effectively analyze SRI scores."

- "I have not yet been trained on how we can dig deeper into a student's score to see what types of questions were missed. I am interested in how we can use the SRI data along with data from other assessments to make instructional decisions for my students."

During Barb's interview, she indicated the need for multiple measures of reading assessments. She stated,

> "When the students stopped taking the NYS exam they [the district] needed a multiple measure and they no longer had one for every student because not every student took the exam, so I think the SRI was a way to get a standardized number for every student so they [the district] could determine AIS (Academic Intervention Services) services. There is probably more we could do with the SRI, but we have not been provided with that information."

Many teachers believe that multiple measures of reading assessments should be made available. It would not only benefit them, as a means to make instructional decisions, but it would also benefit the students and those who need additional support services.

Finding Four: Teachers have found the DRA2 to be more valuable and accurate than the SRI when it comes to the type of information provided by both assessments.

All but one of the teacher questionnaire responses reported that the teachers believe the DRA2 is the most valuable and accurate tool their district has to offer. When it comes to accuracy, in most cases, the teachers see more commonalities between the results of the DRA2 and their observations in the classroom. The format of the DRA2 is teacher friendly and easy to follow. Although the teachers were provided with multiple trainings on the DRA2, they

expressed that they felt comfortable administering the DRA2 after their initial trial run. When asked "*Do you think the DRA2 is an accurate tool for collecting reading knowledge and comprehension for students? If so, how do you use the information from the DRA2? If not, why do you think it is inaccurate or invalid?"* The use of the Continuum Rubric was a reoccurring theme among the teacher responses. The DRA2 recording form includes a rubric, which allows the teachers to pinpoint and decide which areas of reading each child needs support with.

- "I look at the rubric from each student's work to decide which areas I need to support the students on."
- "The analysis rubric helps me see which students are struggling with literal comprehension, making inferences, reflecting accurately, using text evidence effectively, and reflecting on metacognitive strategies."
- "I use the rubric to determine the student's reading abilities. It is broken down according to reading engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension. If there is an area the student scored low in, such as questioning/predicting, I know to work on those areas of comprehension."
- "I prefer to use the *Focus for Instruction* chart, along with the rubric. The chart highlights specific areas to work on, according to how the student scored. For example, I have a student who scored a two on expression, meaning he read with some expression that conveys meaning. The chart gives ideas for how to work on the student's areas of need."

During the semi-structured interviews, Laura also explained her use of the Continuum Rubric. She stated,

> "The continuum helps me to pinpoint where they (the students) are struggling. I will look at the comprehension because those questions are based on their written assessment that

they do independently. They are allowed to use the book for part of the comprehension section. When the students are finished with the writing portion, I use the rubric to score their responses."

Two participants specifically talked about the written portion of the DRA2 and expressed their thoughts in opposing ways. One teacher wrote, "The written component reveals a lot about what a student understands and thinks about the piece, from literal understandings to making logical inferences. Even my students who dislike writing, do better on the DRA2 than on the SRI assessment, when it comes to comprehension." On the other hand, one response was quite different than the others. This teacher stated, "I find the DRA2 to be somewhat accurate. Often kids avoid the necessary attention to detail in their written responses, which leads to a lower comprehension score. Many times good writers look like strong readers and poor writers look like weak readers." Both responses represent the advantages and disadvantages of the independent component of the DRA2, the written component. The written component of the DRA2 may not paint an accurate picture of a student's comprehension if the student struggles to express their understanding of a text through writing.

The teachers find that the DRA2 is useful, in a way that benefits them. One teacher stated he/she prefers to use the DRA2 at the beginning of the year, as a baseline assessment. The teacher went on to explain that at the intermediate level, once the student is reading at or above grade level, the DRA2 assessment no longer needs to be administered with that child. They are able to work one-on-one with each student to make their own observations about the student's ability. One teacher explained, "The initial reading session helps me understand how a student attacks a piece of text for a cold read: miscue analysis, reading longer sentences, working with

intonation and emotion when reading, and ability to make solid predictions after that initial reading."

The teachers enjoy being able to listen and assess the student's oral reading accuracy, which includes fluency, rate, and decoding skills. From this information, they are able to specifically target weak areas according to the student's oral reading skills. When asked, *"What do you find most useful from the Developmental Reading Assessment?"* the responses were relatively similar.

- "The fluency section and accompanying questions to help diagnose fluency, rate and decoding issues is outstanding. The comprehension questions are useful for students that have high fluency scores but lack in comprehension."
- "The DRA2 is a helpful assessment tool because I am given time to listen and record on student's oral reading fluency and rate. Students then independently read and answer comprehension questions, which I later score. The way that students are scored used the DRA2 allows for me to specifically target weak areas such as oral reading fluency (expression, rate, and accuracy) and comprehension (questioning, literal comprehension, summarizing, interpretations, and reflection). I am able to group students by very specific needs, allowing for variation in reading center groups."
- "I like being able to conduct a fluency check first to get a student into an appropriate text. When the student reads aloud it helps me understand how a student works with phrasing, error analysis, and intonation when reading. I also like how the DRA2 pushes a student to make a claim and defend that claim with evidence from the text."

The teachers also expressed this aspect of the assessment is helpful when grouping students according to specific needs. The teachers explained that they are constantly rearranging student

groups according to the needs in their classroom; sometimes groups are based on oral reading and decoding needs, and other times groups are based on comprehension needs.

These data also show that the intermediate teachers do not find the information provided from the SRI to be valuable because they are not provided specific information about a student's strengths and needs when it comes to comprehension. One teacher explained that strong readers in her class score well on the SRI, which aligns with her observations in the classroom. The teacher went on to explain that weak readers in her class score well below their "projected" ability level, which paints a false picture of what the student is capable of. When asked, *"What do you find most useful from the Scholastic Reading Inventory?"* the responses included:

- "The SRI gives me very little information about a student's reading ability. Students take the assessment on their iPads, three times a year, and I am sent a spreadsheet with their scores. These scores take into account reading level and comprehension of a given text."
- "I find that looking at changes in scores over time is beneficial. For example, comparing fall/winter/spring scores at the end of the school year helps with progress monitoring purposes."
- "[The SRI] helps more for the students that are at reading level as a tool to confirm what I have already observed. It is not useful to diagnose reading issues and plan for interventions. It simply tells me who is "at level" or above or below."
- "The SRI is given several times over the course of a year or two, and it helps to show growth or lack of growth."

The teachers expressed their frustrations with the format of the SRI. Due to the lack of training, the teachers are unaware of the different features they have access to. The teachers described the desire for wanting to see actual tests, once the students are finished. This would

help them to understand where, exactly, the students struggled. They question whether the students may have struggled with vocabulary words, literal questions, and inferential questions. One teacher observed that the students with stamina and focusing problems struggle tremendously with the format of the SRI. This teacher added, "I have students who struggle to sit and read a book of interest for 20-30 minutes, let alone work independently on a reading assessment on their iPad. Some students rush through the assessment and guess at the answers because they have trouble staying focused." The teachers agree, at the intermediate level, the students should be able to perform to their ability in an independent setting; however, there is a minority of students who struggle to be successful with independent tasks and assessments.

A positive feature of the SRI comes at the end of the student test. The students receive their Lexile level, immediately following the completion of the test. Along with their score, a reading list is generated, and the students are able to print this list to use as a reference when searching for books at their independent level. The teachers also use the Lexile levels to create reading groups, but other data are also taken into consideration to form these groups. One teacher explained, "The Lexile scores make it very easy to group students for instructional homogeneous groupings to work on comprehension skills. The Lexile assessment also provides students suggestions for books that they might enjoy, which is helpful."

The teachers admit that the usefulness of the SRI is lacking in ways that it benefits them. They receive very little information in regard to what the student can and can't do. The SRI is also not a useful tool to diagnose reading issues. However, it can be useful when creating book groups for students. The teachers use the Lexile scores to match students to books they will be reading for their guided reading groups. The SRI also is used by the teachers as part of their progress monitoring. They track the students' progress by collecting scores from the beginning,

middle, and end of the year. These scores are used to show if the student is making adequate growth throughout the year, or if a more intense reading intervention is needed.

Finding Five: Teachers use information from the DRA2 when planning for future reading instruction.

Ultimately, it is the task of the teachers to use data from reading assessments in a way that informs further instruction. The teachers explain the purpose for reading assessments is to assess the mastery of reading skills, at a specific level, and to plan for instruction. School districts usually have specific reading assessments in place, and encourage teachers to use the data from the assessments to drive their instruction. The teachers discussed the use of conferencing to inform their students of their strengths and needs, and to engage students in creating learning goals. The DRA2 gives the teachers specific information about a student's oral reading fluency skills and comprehension skills. The teachers explained how they use this information during reading conferences to discuss student performance. When asked, *"How do you inform your students of their strengths and needs, which you have found from their reading assessments?"* Many teacher responses addressed the use of data from both the DRA2 and the SRI. After reading through each response, I found that the teachers share specific information from the DRA2 and broad information from the SRI. The following are a few examples:

- With the SRI we talk about scores and rough ranges of appropriate books. With the DRA2, I talk about instructional and independent reading levels. I also share with the students what their written component reveals about their ability to reflect on the piece read.
- Following the DRA2 assessment, I meet with students to discuss their current reading level and what they did really well at. I also give them suggestions to focus on when

reading independently. The SRI provides students with their Lexile score and book recommendations, so I do not conference with students after completing this assessment.

- When conferencing with students, I inform them of the strategy or skill they will be working on in their reading groups. I explain to the students why they are grouped together and what the goal of instruction will be for them.

Most of the responses to this question were similar; the teachers prefer to share the information they receive from both assessments with their students, to make them accountable for their learning. However, there was one response that was slightly different. One teacher explained, "I do not go over the assessment with most of my students. I believe that the information from this assessment is for us as teachers to use to inform our teaching." This teacher does not focus on going over each assessment, with each student in her class. He/she prefers to use the information to make instructional decisions when planning. Once reading groups are created and learning targets for the groups are made, the teacher discusses next steps with the students in reading groups. "During instruction, I will discuss with the students that we will be working to develop certain skills and strategies in our reading and writing." This approach saves time, instead of conferencing with the students regarding their performance on the assessments. The teacher looks at the data and forms her groups according to the skills that need developing. Once the groups are formed, the teacher meets with each group and informs them, as a whole, what skill or strategy they will be working on.

In addition to informing their students about their strengths and needs, the teachers were asked about creating learning goals with their students. I was interested in learning whether the teachers include the students when creating learning goals, or if they create these goals on their own. When asked, *"What do you look for when engaging students with creating learning*

goals?" collaboration between the teacher and the student was a reoccurring theme. I found that half of the responses described how they use data from the DRA2 when discussing learning goals with their students:

- "I ask my students to seriously reflect on areas of need. Together, we look at the continuum and scores on the DRA2. I look to see if the student can clearly identify what an area of need is, and how to potentially attack it. For example, I want to see if a student can see that a lack of reading habit directly connects to reading stamina, and many times reading comprehension."
- "I question students to see what they know about their own reading skills and match that to what I have learned from the DRA2 and my observations in the classroom."

I also found that the other half of responses describing considering the student as a whole learner, not just focusing on what the reading assessments say:

- When engaging students with creating learning goals, the whole reading process must be examined. I often try to work backward to the earliest foundation reading gaps. A student who decodes well but lacks understanding often has many other underlying learning issues (language processing, limited life experiences, poor working memory, etc.).
- When students create their independent learning goals, I primarily encourage them to look at ATLs (Approaches to Learning): thinking skills, organization skills, research, communication, affective, reflection and social skills. Students more often than not will create academic goals that are directly related to my own goals, simply be reflecting on their process towards ATLs.

The teachers believe, at the intermediate level, the students should be responsible and take part in creating their own learning goals, and their progress toward meeting those goals. Whether they use data from the reading assessments or their classroom observations, students are an important aspect of the process of creating learning goals. When it comes to the DRA2 and the SRI, the teachers are more apt to use the data from the DRA2, because it provides more specific information about an individual student.

Discussion

Summary of Findings:

The purpose of this study was to examine two reading assessments, the Developmental Reading Assessment and the Scholastic Reading Inventory, to determine what information is provided. This study also concentrated on how teachers use the information from the assessments to drive their instruction. This study was focused on the following research questions:

- *What areas are the foci of Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) assessments?*
    - *How does each tool assess comprehension and the process of reading?*
- *How do the SRI and the DRA2 compare in terms of the information that they provide about readers?*
    - *What does the information provided by the assessment tool say about individual students as readers?*
    - *How do teachers and literacy specialists use data to drive their instruction?*

Throughout this four-week study, I found that the teachers use both assessments in very different ways. This is a result of their professional training in each assessment and what

information they have access to. The teachers use the observable data from the DRA2, rather than the numbers they receive from the SRI, when planning for future instruction. Both the DRA2 and the SRI focus on assessing reading comprehension skills, whereas the DRA2 allows teachers to assess oral reading fluency skills as well. At the intermediate level, both Afflerbach (2012) and Foster and Miller (2007) emphasize the importance of reading comprehension skills as a means for *reading to learn.* Students use their background knowledge and vocabulary, along with new vocabulary to express their new understandings of the text. The SRI assessment is completed independently by the student and does not allow the teachers to make their own observations of the students as they work. The DRA2 assessment is teacher-led and allows the teachers to administer the assessment in a one-on-one setting to make their own observations and analysis.

The teachers also use the information from the DRA2 when conferencing with students about their performance and their next steps. Johnson & Keier (2012) discuss Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Theory as a way of assisting the students in their learning and progress. The teachers take into consideration the needs of their students to plan further instruction of literacy skills and strategies. As stated earlier, the teachers prefer to use the data they collect from the DRA2, rather than the data they receive from the SRI, because the information is more detailed and specific for each student. With specific information about the student's oral reading fluency and comprehension skills, the teachers are able to work within the student's ZPD to adjust and modify instruction. The teachers are also able to use the Gradual Release of Responsibility Theory to model a certain skill, practice the skill with the student, and then allow the student to use that skill in an independent setting.

Conclusions and Implications:

Conclusion One: Teachers are using data from one reading assessment to plan for future instruction.

After a closer look at my findings, I was able to conclude that the teachers are making important decisions, in regard to literacy instruction, based on information collected from only one reading assessment, the DRA2. Both the DRA2 and the SRI assess reading comprehension, but the teachers only focus on data from the DRA2. The teachers believe the DRA2 provides useful information necessary to conference with their students. "The real benefit of [reading assessments] is the knowledge teachers gain while assessing individual children because [it] provides insights about needed instruction" (Paris & Hoffman, 2004, p. 207). The DRA2 allows teachers to observe and record literacy behaviors regarding students' oral reading fluency and comprehension; it also provides a chart for the teachers to use to focus their instruction according to the students' needs. According to Burgin and Hughes (2009), performance data is needed to individualize instruction. The validity and reliability of assessment data collected through the DRA2 have a significant impact instructional decision making. It was clear that the teachers see more similarities between student performances on the DRA2 and their classroom observations. Russell (2013) describes reading assessments as a way to identify students' strengths and needs, determine students' reading levels, and to help guide instruction. As explained previously, Barb struggled with a particular student who was not making much growth and was stuck at the same independent reading level for the majority of the year. In regard to this specific student, she was concerned that the features of the DRA2 would not be beneficial to her in the long run. Because there is a limited number of books per level, the student had read both fiction and nonfiction books provided, within his independent level. If Barb chose to continue assessing the student

with the familiar texts, it would result in an inaccurate data, due to the fact that the student would no longer be engaged in a cold read of the text. Teachers should use different types of assessments for a variety of purposes such as screening, diagnostic testing, progress monitoring, and summative assessment (Russell, 2013). The teachers expressed their concerns regarding the use of one reading assessment to drive their instruction.

Implication One: Teachers need multiple measures of reading assessments that assess all areas of literacy.

Teachers should be provided with the opportunity to use multiple reading assessments, in order to get a holistic representation of students' capabilities and to plan for instruction that is purposeful and meaningful. Paris and Hoffman (2004) discussed both commercial and non-commercial assessments. Commercial assessments come in the form of kits or systems that include materials such as teacher guides, developmental rubrics, and leveled books. These systems demand more judgment making and interpretations from the teacher (Paris & Hoffman, 2004). Non-commercial assessments most frequently assess phonics and comprehension and seldom focus on motivation and attitudes towards reading (Paris & Hoffman, 2004). Regardless, if the school district chooses a commercial reading assessment kit or develops a district specific reading assessment, the reading assessments should measure growth, promote deep understanding and critical thinking skills, and assess high proficiency in literacy skills. Multiple measures of reading assessment are not only important for student growth and achievement, but also for the benefit of the teacher. Using multiple measures of reading assessment can either confirm the teachers' thoughts and assumptions about their students' learning or contradict their assumptions. Multiple measures of reading assessment, whether it is in the form of commercial

assessment kits, district/school assessments, or teacher-created assessments, should be considered by education stakeholders.

Conclusion Two: Teachers are not properly trained on the reading assessments the district is mandating them to administer.

The results of this study confirm the inadequate training for one, if not both, reading assessments. One hundred percent of the participants admitted to not having the correct training on the reading assessments they administer and analyze each year. The teachers shared their training experiences with the DRA2, as well as their limited training on the SRI. One teacher admitted she was trained on the DRA2 at the elementary level, but not again when she transferred to the intermediate level. This is a cause for concern because the assessments are different at either level. Training should be continuous, to ensure the administration and scoring of the assessments are alike amongst the intermediate teachers, as well as the literacy specialist. To be valid and reliable, the teachers need to become masters of the trade, meaning they need to be experts when it comes to administering and analyzing the reading assessments they use. According to Paris and Hoffman (2004), "Teachers need guidance in administering them [reading assessments], interpreting them, and using the results with students and parents, and that guidance needs to be shared knowledge among the school staff so it creates a culture of understanding about reading assessments" (p. 207).

After further exploration of the SRI, following the teacher interviews, I found much more information that could be very useful to teachers. This is a result of lacking the necessary training to use the information that is provided within the online database. The teachers explained that their training on the SRI was in the form of an email, which provided them with the website and login information for themselves and their students. They were also informed

that after the completion of the assessment, a spreadsheet with Lexile scores would be available once they logged into the website. The teachers were not trained on what is also available to them regarding student performance, besides the student's score on the assessment.

Implication Two: Ongoing professional development is needed, along with professional learning communities (PLCs).

When considering mandatory professional development sessions, school administration should take into consideration the needs of the teachers regarding reading assessments. Through this study, I learned the teachers do not necessarily stray outside of their comfort zone when it comes to the reading assessments they administer. Not much exploration was done by the teachers when it came to the SRI; they administered the assessment within the timeframe given by the district and looked over the spreadsheet that became available on the website. The reason for this may be caused by the fact that they do not use the data from the SRI when planning for further instruction. If the teachers were more knowledgeable of the features available to them, they may use the information as another data point in decision making. According to Hayes and Robnolt (2007), "Data-driven professional development can assist school leaders in their efforts to provide appropriate and effective development for their teachers" (p. 105). Not only do teachers need professional training for the reading assessments they administer, they need professional development that looks closely at the data they are collecting in their classrooms. Together, teachers need to learn how to administer and analyze reading assessments in order to have valid results. Teachers have an important task to properly administer and analyze reading assessment data. If they lack the appropriate training, it not only hurts the students' success, but the school's success as a whole.

The use of professional learning communities is also important for the success of teachers. Many of the participants shared their frustrations and fears when analyzing data. The comprehension section of the DRA2, at the intermediate level, involves written responses. Two teachers admitted their lack of confidence when scoring this section. Professional learning communities would benefit the grade level as a whole, by allowing the teachers to collaborate and learn from one another when it comes to administering and analyzing the assessments. Teachers need to feel comfortable to share experiences and knowledge with one another. According to Abbott and Wren (2016), teacher engagement in professional learning communities allows for continuous school improvement.

Limitations:

The limitations of this study included time, the number of participants, and transferability (Shagoury & Power, 2012). The school district where I conducted my research has two additional elementary schools, which also use the Developmental Reading Assessment and Scholastic Reading Inventory. Due to the time constraints, I was unable to reach out to intermediate teachers (fifth and sixth-grade) from the other elementary schools to participate in this study. The short time frame directly relates to the transferability of my study. The sample sizes from the survey and the interviews were small and limited to general education teachers and one literacy specialist.

Recommendations for Further Research:

Based on the results of my research and the limitations of my study, I would recommend further research to include additional participants and additional grade levels. As I previously mentioned, I was unable to speak with intermediate teachers from the other elementary schools. I believe it would be beneficial to include additional participants in both the teacher

questionnaire and interviews. It would also be beneficial to include more literacy specialists, as well as special education teachers, to learn their perspectives of the reading assessments they regularly administer. I am interested to know if the intermediate teachers from other elementary schools, within the district, have been provided with training on the Scholastic Reading Inventory and if they use the information they receive in a valuable way. Further research that includes a wide arrange of grade levels would also be helpful in understanding the development of literacy skills and how they are assessed. As stated earlier, the DRA2 has different levels and ways of administering the assessment. From kindergarten to third-grade the reading comprehension section is through oral responses, and from fourth-grade to eight-grade the reading comprehension section is through written responses. This progression of assessments would be vital research to include in the future.

Closing

This study is important because it took a deeper look into common reading assessments that are used in our school districts, locally and nationwide. The results of this study have brought awareness to the aspects of reading assessment data and how the data is being used, in an effective or ineffective way. Through a closer examination of these two reading assessments, we can pinpoint what areas of literacy are being assessed and what areas need more attention. Not only should teachers be held accountable for administering and analyzing reading assessments, but districts should focus on what types of reading assessments will be beneficial to teachers and students as they continue to learn and progress through education. This study will also encourage the need for appropriate training, in regard to reading assessments.

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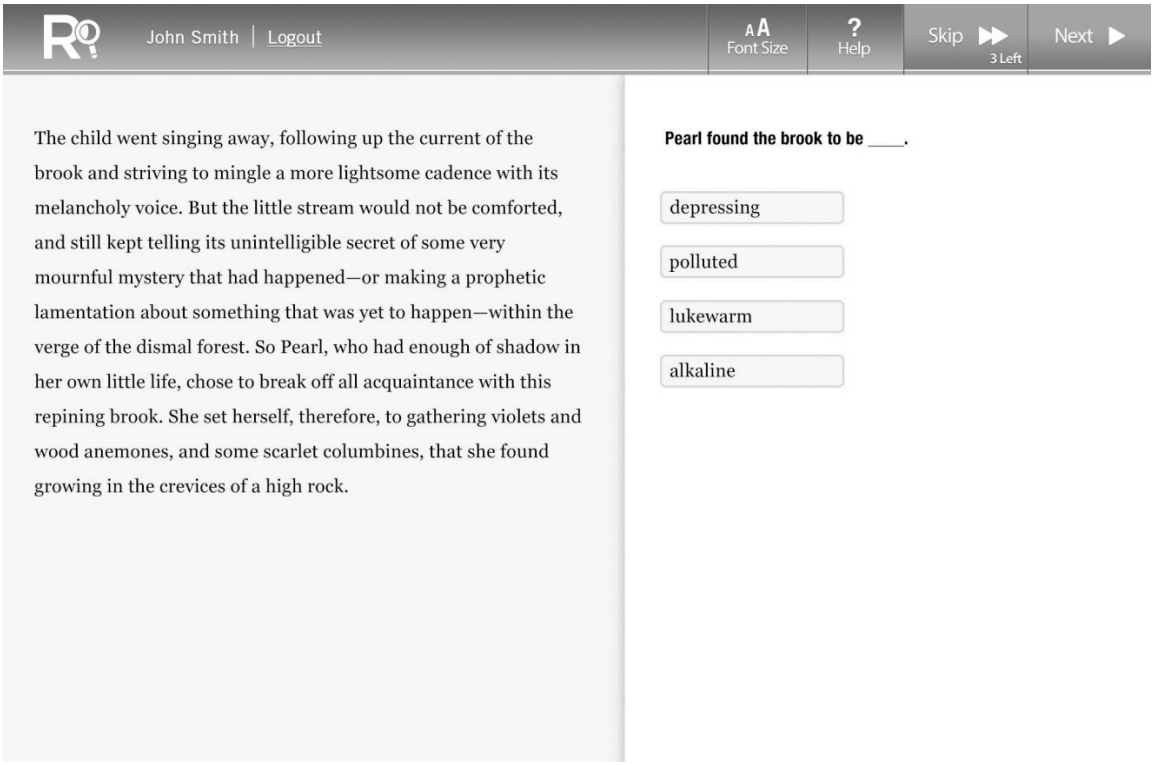
Appendix A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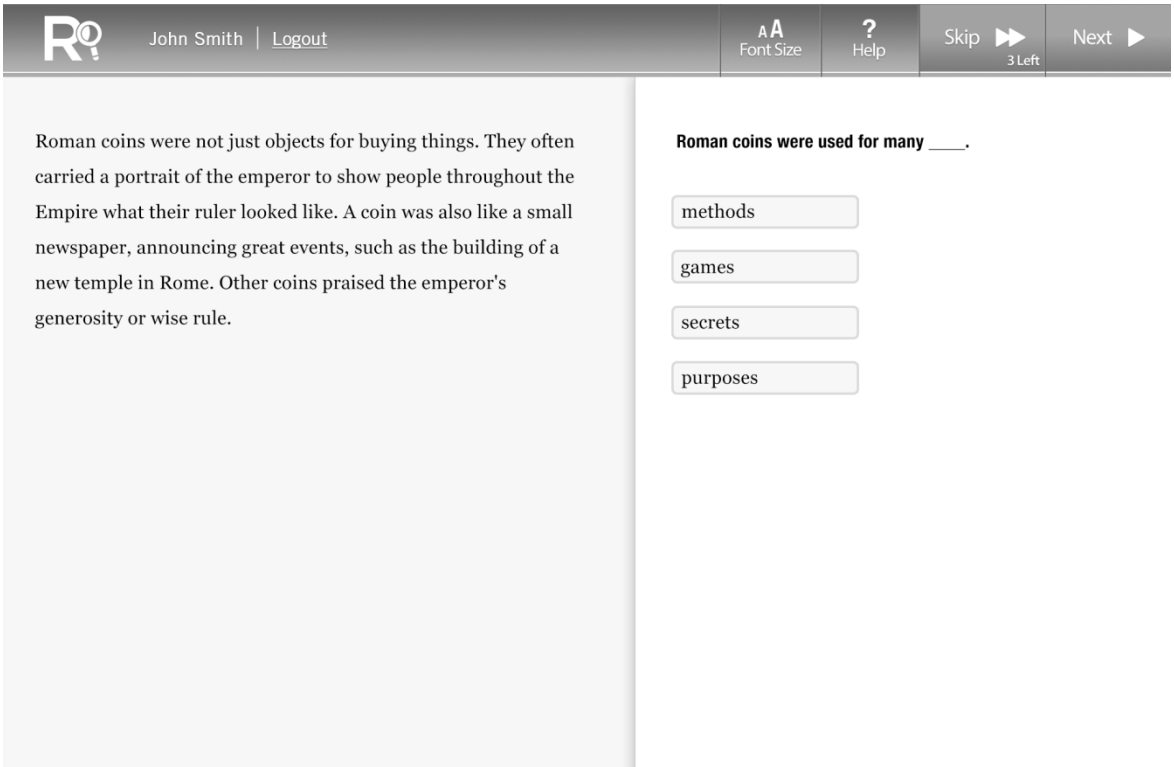
Next
The child went singing away, following up the current of the brook and striving to mingle a more lightsome cadence with its melancholy voice. But the little stream would not be comforted, and still kept telling its unintelligible secret of some very mournful mystery that had happened—or making a prophetic lamentation about something that was yet to happen—within the verge of the dismal forest. So Pearl, who had enough of shadow in her own little life, chose to break off all acquaintance with this repining brook. She set herself, therefore, to gathering violets and wood anemones, and some scarlet columbines, that she found growing in the crevices of a high rock.
Pearl found the brook to be ____.
depressing
polluted
lukewarm
alkaline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Roman coins were not just objects for buying things. They often carried a portrait of the emperor to show people throughout the Empire what their ruler looked like. A coin was also like a small newspaper, announcing great events, such as the building of a new temple in Rome. Other coins praised the emperor's generosity or wise rule.
Roman coins were used for many ____.
methods
games
secrets
purposes

Appendix B

Teacher Observation Guide **Amelia Earhart: The Woman Who Wanted to Fly** Level 38, Page 1

Name/Date Teacher/Grade

Scores: Reading Engagement ___/8 Oral Reading Fluency ___/16 Comprehension ___/24
Independent Range: 6–7 11–14 17–22

Book Selection Text selected by: ☐ teacher ☐ student

1. READING ENGAGEMENT

Ask the student to bring his or her reading record to the conference. Read aloud the questions on the Student Reading Survey and record the student's responses if the survey was not completed prior to the assessment conference.

2. ORAL READING FLUENCY

INTRODUCTION

T: This book is called* Amelia Earhart: The Woman Who Wanted to Fly. *It is a biography about a woman who became a famous pilot. Please read aloud to the star on page 5. Show the student where to stop reading at the ✱.

RECORD OF ORAL READING

Record the student's oral reading behaviors. Note the student's fluency (expression and phrasing). Be sure to time the student's reading.

Page 2

Amelia's Childhood

Amelia Earhart is one of America's most famous pilots. She was born in July 1897 in Kansas. Amelia was smart and brave, and she loved adventure.

Page 3

When Amelia was seven years old, she went to the St. Louis World's Fair. She rode on a roller coaster. It was so much fun. Amelia's sister and uncle helped her build one in the backyard.

The tracks ran from the shed roof down to the grass. They made the tracks slick. Amelia would lie on the cart at the top of the tracks. Her sister would hold her feet and then let go. Amelia felt like she was flying!

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Page 4

Amelia's First Flight

Amelia took her first plane ride when she was twenty-three years old. She flew in a **biplane**. The ride lasted ten minutes. Amelia knew she had to fly her own plane. She worked hard to pay for flying lessons. The day she turned twenty-five, she bought a bright yellow plane. She named it **The Canary**.

Page 5

Amelia set a lot of records. At the age of thirty-one, she became the first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a plane. The trip was exciting. So, she wanted to fly her own plane across the ocean.

Time: _____ minutes:seconds

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ORAL READING WORDS PER MINUTE, PERCENT OF ACCURACY

Use the student's oral reading time to circle the WPM range.

Word Count: 208

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND	ADV
Minutes:Seconds	3:00 or more	2:59–2:20	2:19–1:40	1:39 or less
WPM	69 or less	70–89	90–125	126 or more

Count the number of miscues that are not self-corrected. Circle the percent of accuracy based on the number of miscues.

	INTRVN	INSTR	IND			ADV	
Number of Miscues	12 or more	10–11	8–9	6–7	4–5	1–3	0
Percent of Accuracy	94 or less	95	96	97	98	99	100

- If the student's score falls in a shaded area for either WPM or Accuracy, STOP! Reassess with a lower-level text.

3. COMPREHENSION

STUDENT PREDICTION and NONFICTION TEXT FEATURES

Read aloud the questions/prompts on page 1 in the Student Booklet, and record the student's responses on the same page. Do not give additional prompts. Students may use the indicated book pages when responding to the Prediction and Nonfiction Text Features questions/prompts.

Note: Continue with the assessment if time permits. Otherwise, have the student read the book and complete the Student Booklet at another time.

STUDENT READS AND RESPONDS

For students completing the assessment independently, say:

T: Read the text. When you are finished, write a summary of what you have read and answer the remaining questions in the Student Booklet. If you have questions, please come to me (or raise your hand).

All students may use the text to complete pages 2–3 of the Student Booklet.
Note: For students who have an Individual Education Plan in place for reading and/or written communication, follow the directions in their plan. You may read aloud the prompts on pages 2 and 3 of the Student Booklet and/or scribe their responses if required. Give no additional prompts.

While the student reads the text independently, complete the Teacher Analysis of Oral Reading below and circle the descriptors on the *DRA2* Continuum that best describe the student's oral reading fluency.

4. TEACHER ANALYSIS

ORAL READING

If the student had 5 or more different miscues, use the information recorded on the Record of Oral Reading to complete the chart below.

Student problem-solves words using: ☐ blending letter sounds ☐ letter-sound clusters ☐ onset and rime ☐ knowledge of spelling patterns (analogies) ☐ syllables ☐ rereading ☐ no observable behaviors	Number of miscues self-corrected: _____ Number of miscues not self-corrected: _____ Number of words told to the student: _____ **Miscues interfered with meaning:** ☐ never ☐ at times ☐ often	**Miscues included:** ☐ omissions ☐ insertions ☐ reversals ☐ substitutions that were ☐ visually similar ☐ not visually similar
Copy each substitution to help analyze the student's attention to visual information. e.g., plane (substitution) biplane (text)		

Oral Reading Rate: (Optional) Use the formula below to determine the student's exact oral reading rate. Convert the student's reading time to all seconds.

208 (words) ÷ _____ total seconds = _____ WPS × 60 = _____ WPM

***DRA2* Continuum**

- Use the information from the Student Reading Survey and the Student Booklet to circle the descriptors that best describe the student's responses.
- Add the circled numbers to obtain a total score for each section.
- Record the scores at the top of page 1. Record the Comprehension score at the top of page 5 after the colon.

Note: If the Comprehension score is less than 12, administer *DRA2* with a lower-level text at another time.

Level 38, Page 5

Name/Date _____ Teacher/Grade _____ Comprehension Score 38: _____

DRA2 BRIDGE CONTINUUM				
	INTERVENTION	**INSTRUCTIONAL**	**INDEPENDENT**	**ADVANCED**
Reading Engagement				
Wide Reading	1 Title(s) below grade level; limited reading experiences and book knowledge	2 2–3 titles slightly below grade level; some reading experiences	3 At least 4 titles from 2–3 genres or multiple books from 1 genre; generally on-grade-level texts	4 Wide variety of titles across 3 or more genres; many on- and above-grade-level texts
Self-Assessment/ Goal Setting	1 No strengths and/or goals related to the reading process; no real plan	2 General strengths and goals (e.g., read more); general plan	3 At least 1–2 specific strengths and goals related to the reading process; relevant plan	4 3 specific strengths and goals related to the reading process; 2–3-step plan
Score	2 3	4 5	6 7	8
Oral Reading Fluency				
Expression	1 Monotone; very little expression	2 Some expression that conveys meaning	3 Expression emphasizing key phrases and words at times	4 Expression emphasizing key phrases and words effectively
Phrasing	1 Mostly word-by-word	2 Inappropriate pauses; shorter phrases most of the time	3 Generally appropriate pauses; heeds most punctuation; longer, meaningful phrases most of the time	4 Appropriate pauses; heeds all punctuation; consistently longer, meaningful phrases
Rate	1 69 WPM or less	2 70–89 WPM	3 90–125 WPM	4 126 WPM or more
Accuracy	1 94% or less	2 95%	3 96%–98%	4 99%–100%
Score	4 5 6	7 8 9 10	11 12 13 14	15 16
Comprehension				
Questioning/Prediction	1 Unrelated question(s) or no response	2 At least 1 reasonable question related to the text	3 At least 2 reasonable questions that go beyond the text read aloud	4 3 thoughtful questions that go beyond the text read aloud
Nonfiction Text Features	1 Uses incorrect information to respond or is uncertain	2 Uses information/text features to partially respond to the prompt(s)	3 Uses information/text features to accurately respond to both prompts	4 Uses information/text features to effectively respond to both prompts; includes specific details/vocabulary
Scaffolded Summary	1 1–2 ideas/facts in own language and/or copied text; may include incorrect information	2 Partial summary, generally in own language; some important ideas/facts; may include misinterpretations	3 Summary in own language; includes many important ideas, some vocabulary, and supporting details/facts from each section	4 Well-organized summary in own language; includes all important ideas, key vocabulary, and many supporting details/facts from each section
Literal Comprehension	1 Little information from the text and/or incorrect information	2 Partial information from the text; may include misinterpretation	3 Information from the text that accurately responds to question(s) or prompt(s)	4 All important information from the text that effectively responds to question(s) or prompt(s)
Interpretation	1 Limited or no understanding of important text implication(s)	2 Partial understanding of important text implication(s); little or no detail	3 Understands important text implication(s); relevant supporting details	4 Insightful understanding of important text implication(s); important supporting details
Reflection	1 Insignificant or unrelated message or information; no reason for opinion or no response	2 Less significant message or information and general reason(s) for opinion	3 Significant message or information and a relevant reason for opinion	4 Significant message or information and reason(s) for opinion that reflect higher-level thinking
Score	6 7 8 9 10 11	12 13 14 15 16	17 18 19 20 21 22	23 24

Choose three to five learning/teaching activities on the *DRA2* Focus for Instruction on the next page.

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DRA2 FOCUS FOR INSTRUCTION

READING ENGAGEMENT

Wide Reading

- ☐ Teach student strategies to select appropriately leveled texts for independent reading
- ☐ Introduce student to reading materials from a variety of genres and purposes
- ☐ Teach strategies to build reading stamina
- ☐ Create structures and/or routines to support reading at home
- ☐ Develop and monitor clear expectations for amount of independent reading
- ☐ Teach student how to use a reading log to monitor book selection and set reading goals

Self-Assessment/Goal Setting

- ☐ Model and discuss strategies good readers use
- ☐ Help student identify 1–2 reading goals and a plan of action to improve reading
- ☐ Support revision of ongoing reading goals

ORAL READING FLUENCY

Expression and Phrasing

- ☐ Model and teach reading in longer, meaningful phrases with appropriate expression
- ☐ Have student practice appropriate expression with familiar texts
- ☐ Teach student to recognize and emphasize key phrases and words
- ☐ Teach student to heed punctuation

Rate

- ☐ Provide materials and time for repeated readings and timed readings to increase reading rate
- ☐ Give opportunities for student to read lower-level and/or familiar texts at an appropriate rate

Accuracy: Word Analysis

- ☐ Support and reinforce self-corrections of miscues
- ☐ Model and support how to take words apart (e.g., onset and rime, syllables) to problem-solve unknown words
- ☐ Teach how to use word chunks and analogies to problem-solve unknown words

COMPREHENSION

Questioning/Prediction

- ☐ Provide opportunities for student to make predictions based on title, table of contents, and headings
- ☐ Model and support using background information to make meaningful predictions
- ☐ Model and teach student how to pose questions as a basis for predictions
- ☐ Teach student how to make and confirm predictions prior to and during reading

Nonfiction Text Features

- ☐ Model and support how to read and interpret charts, graphs, maps, tables, etc.
- ☐ Model and teach student how to use table of contents, headings, glossary, etc.

Scaffolded Summary

- ☐ Share and identify characteristics of good summaries
- ☐ Model and co-construct written summaries of texts read aloud
- ☐ Model and support how to distinguish between more important and less important ideas and facts
- ☐ Model and support how to write a summary in one's own words
- ☐ Model and support how to use examples from the text
- ☐ Teach student how to use headings to organize a summary of an informational/nonfiction text
- ☐ Provide time for student to practice oral and written summaries

Literal Comprehension

- ☐ Show student how to use key words to identify specific information from the text
- ☐ Provide opportunities for student to answer and construct literal questions
- ☐ Model and support how to locate and use nonfiction text features (e.g., charts, graphs, maps, tables, headings, glossary, bold words, etc.)
- ☐ Teach student how to use and construct graphic organizers to keep track of key ideas and facts

Interpretation

- ☐ Teach and share examples of inferences
- ☐ Provide opportunities for student to support inferences with information or examples from the text
- ☐ Give student opportunities to respond to and construct inference questions orally and in writing
- ☐ Model and support how to interpret nonfiction text features (e.g., how to read a chart or diagram)

Reflection

- ☐ Help student identify important information and/or key vocabulary in a variety of texts
- ☐ Demonstrate how to support opinion with details from the text

OTHER

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Student Booklet ***Amelia Earhart: The Woman Who Wanted to Fly*** Page 1

Name _____ Date _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____

The teacher records the student's responses on this Before Reading page only.

BEFORE READING

PREDICTION

Open the book to the title and table of contents page. What are 3 questions you think may be answered as you read this book?

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

NONFICTION TEXT FEATURES

Turn to the map on pages 12–13. Look at the map and tell me what this map shows you.

_____

_____

_____

Turn to the glossary. What does the word *solo* mean in this book?

_____

_____

_____

Amelia Earhart

AFTER READING

SUMMARY

Write a summary of this book in your own words. Include the important ideas and facts from each section of the book. You may use the book and the headings below to help you write your summary.

Amelia's Childhood _____

Amelia's First Flight _____

Preparing to Fly Solo Across the Atlantic _____

Amelia's Trip _____

What Amelia Believed _____

You may use the book to answer the following questions.

Literal Comprehension

List 3 things that happened to Amelia's plane on her trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

Things That Happened to Amelia's Plane

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Interpretation

How do you think Amelia felt when she landed in Ireland? Tell why she may have felt that way.

_____

_____

Reflection

What do you think is the most important thing that you learned from this book?

_____

_____

_____

Tell why you think it is important. _____

_____

_____

Reread what you have written to make sure your answers are the way you want them before you hand in your booklet.

Appendix C

Reading Assessment Survey:

1. How do you define reading?

2. What do you look for in regard to reading assessments? What literacy skills need to be assessed at the 5th/6th-grade level?

3. What do you find most useful from the Scholastic Reading Inventory?

4. What do you find most useful from the Developmental Reading Assessment?

5. What kind of information is provided from each assessment, relevant to individual students?

6. Do you think the SRI is an accurate tool for collecting reading knowledge and comprehension for students? If so, how do you use the information from the SRI to plan for further instruction? If not, why do you think it is inaccurate or invalid?

7. Do you think the DRA2 is an accurate tool for collecting reading knowledge and comprehension for students? If so, how do you use the information from the DRA2? If not, why do you think it is inaccurate or invalid?

8. How do you inform your students of their strengths and needs, in which you have found from their reading assessments?

9. What do you look for when engaging students with creating learning goals?

10. Do you feel you were properly trained to administer and analyze data from both assessments you use in your classroom?

Appendix D

Student Name: Grade:

What you (teacher) say (classroom observations)	What DRA says (scores)	What SRI says (scores)
	Instructional level: Oral Reading Fluency: Comprehension:	Lexile level:

Additional thoughts?