November 2014

Reading Assessments for Screening/Placement, Diagnosis, and Summative/Outcomes: What Are Schools Using?

Julie Jackson Albee
Hannibal-LaGrange University

Jill Mayes Arnold
Hannibal-LaGrange University

Larinee Dennis
Hannibal-LaGrange University

B. Jane Schaefer
Hannibal-LaGrange University

Sarah Olson
Hannibal-LaGrange University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.stjohns.edu/thereadingprofessor

Part of the Language and Literacy Education Commons

Reading Assessments for Screening/Placement, Diagnosis, and Summative/Outcomes: What Are Schools Using?

JULIE JACKSON ALBEE, JILL MAYES ARNOLD, LARINEE DENNIS,
B. JANE SCHAFER, and SARAH OLSON,
Hannibal-LaGrange University, Hannibal, Missouri

With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001), the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that authorizes Response to Intervention (RtI), and more recently the adoption of the Common Core State Standards by 45 states (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2011), a focus on reading assessment has increased. Schools are required to follow the mandates of NCLB and IDEA due to the link between federal funds and student performance. To meet the challenges of these federal mandates, schools of education need to know what reading assessments are currently used in order to prepare preservice teachers to administer assessments with the goal of improving reading performance.

Review of the Literature

The results of the "2012 What's Hot and What's Not Literacy Survey" (Cassidy & Loveless, 2011) revealed that reading assessment and remediation are at the forefront of today's educational concerns. Programs of teacher education need to intentionally prepare future teachers to meet this challenge. According to Merkley, Duffelmeyer, Beed, Jensen and Bobys (2007), "Supporting all children's reading needs within the core curriculum requires extending and refining teachers' knowledge of literacy instruction and monitoring. Additional preparation in diagnostic teaching and classroom assessment are of paramount importance in teacher education programs at the preservice level" (p. 464). In teacher education programs, understanding assessment purposes should be as seriously emphasized as instructional proficiency (Popham, 2011). Good and Kaminski (2002) defined four different reading assessment purposes: screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring and outcomes. Numerous reading assessments are used to meet each of these four purposes. However, the ultimate purpose of the selection and use of any reading assessment should be based on "whether it helps students" (Farr, 1992, p. 28). Instructional change in response to test results is the goal. Educators "face a formidable task of finding appropriate tools, obtaining them, and then adapting the assessments to their own purposes and students" according to the results of four surveys conducted by the Center for Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) (Paris & Hoffman, 2004, p. 205). Paris and Hoffman also noted, "This research, as well as studies outside the immediate CIERA network, points to the need for continuing study of assessment in early literacy" (2004, p. 214). This study addresses that need by gathering data on current literacy assessment practices, based on

three purposes—screening, diagnosis, and summative/outcome—to inform teacher education programs. Before taking a look at current practices, it is important to examine reading assessment in the past.

Reading assessments have changed significantly in the past twenty-five years. Stahlman and Pearson (1990), early reading assessment researchers, examined 20 commercial formal measures of early literacy and found they were primarily group-administered, time-consuming, and focused on identification of skills rather than the production of skills. Meisels and Piker (2000) studied 89 informal curriculum-embedded K-3 reading assessments and found that these assessments were more often individually administered and required the production of oral and written responses. They reported that most of the informal assessments were developed between 1989 and 1999.

A select group of schools was surveyed by Paris, Paris, and Carpenter (2002), who studied the reading assessments used in K-3 classrooms to identify the frequency of use. Teachers in this study rated the following types of assessments according to their impact on student motivation and student production of skills: performance, teacher-designed, word attack/word meaning, fluency and understanding, commercial, and standardized. When teachers had a voice in selecting the assessment, they perceived it was more beneficial to students' learning than high-stakes assessments over which they had no voice. Teachers rated the assessments over which they participated in selection as more beneficial to students' learning than high-stakes assessments over which they had no control. Burke and Wang (2010) surveyed reading assessment techniques used by reading teachers in grades 3-5 in five school districts in the Mississippi Delta. Their research revealed that "daily observations of students was the most frequently reported technique used, followed by questioning techniques, pencil and paper tests, performance assessments and writing" (Burke & Wang, 2010, p. 661). These studies also revealed a significant shift from group-administered to individually-administered assessments.

Stakeholders—states, school boards, administrators, parents, teachers, students, and the general public—have varying expectations for student achievement. Not all stakeholders have a realistic understanding of the variance in students' capabilities and background knowledge that significantly impacts students' ability to learn and perform on tests. With an increase in the amount of mandated

testing and the wide variety of reading assessments available, educators must make strategic decisions in order to obtain helpful information about students' performance. Determining "who needs information about reading, what kind of information is needed, and when it is needed" (Farr, 1992, p. 28) is essential in planning assessment and appropriate instruction. Selecting from the broad variety of reading assessments available for use in elementary schools is a daunting task. A primary purpose of this survey was to determine what reading assessments are used across the United States for screening/placement, diagnosis and summative/outcomes, at the kindergarten, primary, and intermediate levels, in order to inform the reading curriculum of teacher education programs.

Research Questions

This article addresses four research questions that were answered in the survey: 1) What screening/placement reading assessments are currently used, and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction? 2) What diagnostic reading assessments are currently used, and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction? 3) What key outcome/summative assessments are currently used, and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction? 4) How effectively do reading assessments meet specified needs?, and 5) How are reading assessments primarily determined in schools?

Methodology

Prior to conducting the study, institutional financial support was secured to purchase the mailing list, survey materials, and postage; then permission was granted from the university's Institutional Review Board. The Reading Assessment and Remediation Survey was mailed to a random sample of 1,000 principals, drawn from 22,027 members of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), representing elementary school leaders across the nation. The principals' names were obtained from a computer-generated mailing list of 1,500 random names of NAESP active members purchased from Rickard List Marketing. One hundred ninety-seven names on the list were deleted due to no accompanying school identification. An additional 303 names were omitted using a prescribed pattern of every third then every fourth name, alternating, until 1,000 names remained. Each of the 1,000 participants was mailed a survey packet containing three parts: a cover sheet with directions requesting demographic information and explaining that the survey could be completed in either online or paper/pencil version, a survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Nine surveys were returned as undeliverable.

Description of Participants

In fall 2010, 85 participants completed the paper version of the survey and 17 completed the online version, for a total of 102 surveys. In spring 2011, a follow-up reminder email was sent to 544 participants whose school email addresses could be determined. The follow-up email included a link to the survey that could be completed online, if it was not returned earlier. Nineteen additional online surveys (3.4%) were completed, bringing the total surveys completed to 121 (85 paper and pencil, 36 online) or 12.2% (121 out of 991) return rate.

Although the return rate was considerably lower than desired, postmarks on 85 paper surveys and online response of 19 spring 2011 surveys showed that respondents represented schools in 34 of the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia. All geographic regions of the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, were represented in this study. State representation was not possible to determine for the 17 fall 2010 online surveys, so it is probable that responses represented more than 34 states.

Of the 121 returned surveys, 119 included the requested demographic information, although ten surveys did not contain responses to at least one item. Principals (80.4%), reading/literacy coaches (6.3%), and Title I teachers (4.5%) were the primary survey respondents reporting a range of 7 to 46 years in the field of education, a mode of 30 years (8.8%), and a median of 25 years of experience. The majority, 83.1%, possessed masters or specialist degrees and 11.6% had earned doctorates. Districts ranged in size from 1 to 65 elementary schools.

Respondents from schools with more than 300 students comprised 74.8% of participants while 3.5% were from schools with fewer than 100 students. A majority of respondents was from rural districts (50.9%), followed by suburban (36.6%), and urban (12.5%). The number of school districts on the U.S. Census 2010 as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics (United States Department of Education, 2011), is 36.5% town/rural districts, 34.4% suburban districts, and 29.0% city/urban districts. The percentage of survey respondents followed a similar pattern—more responses from town/rural, followed by suburban, and fewer from city-urban districts, but the proportion of responses over-represented rural districts and under-represented urban districts.

Survey Instrument Development

To query principals or building literacy leaders about the current state of reading assessment and remediation, a survey instrument was sought. After a review of the literature, no survey instrument was located that completely addressed the previously listed research questions. Therefore, an instrument was created to collect the desired data. For validation purposes, the instrument was reviewed by literacy experts at two universities, by three elementary principals, and by one retired school superintendent. Feedback from these reviewers, such as content, clarity, spacing, formatting, placement of definitions, and Survey Monkey option, was used to simplify and revise the survey instrument. In fall 2010, a pilot group of elementary principals in a regional principals' association completed and critiqued the instrument. Additional revisions were made to the instrument based on their feedback, such as omitting a few open-ended questions. The final survey was a 21-item, semi-structured instrument to measure reading assessment

and remediation in elementary schools.

The three parts of the Reading Assessment and Remediation Survey contained a variety of question types: a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Highly Dissatisfied), categorical, single response, ordered response, listing, rating and open-ended. This article reports two portions of the survey, including identification of reading assessments used for the purposes of screening, diagnosis, and outcomes (Good & Kaminiski, 2002) as well as general information. In the Reading Assessments portion, respondents listed the reading assessments used for different purposes, the grade level where the assessments were used, and the degree of satisfaction with the assessment. For example: "What key screening or placement reading assessment/instrument is given to kindergarten students? What is the degree of satisfaction with this instrument?" In the General Information portion, respondents replied to prompts, such as, "The reading assessments used in our school provide adequate information to monitor our students' literacy program."

Data Analysis

The researchers were primarily interested in establishing the existence and frequency of use of specific assessments, techniques, and actions, so the analysis involved quantifying and tallying the presence of each listed item and determining percentages. Predictive Analysis Software (PASW), Statistics 18, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, was used for the statistical analysis. The data recorded in each survey item was coded for analysis by PASW. A number was assigned to each response. The list of assessments was condensed to group similar responses (i.e. all state reading assessments were listed in one category). Descriptive statistics were used to report items with a specific, a/priori response option and to answer each research question.

Survey Results and Discussion

The survey results organized by research question are presented in this section. A discussion follows each question's results. The categories in this section are: screening/placement, diagnostic, and outcomes reading assessments.

Screening/Placement Reading Assessment

The first research question asked, "What screening/

placement reading assessments are currently used in your school, and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction?" Respondents listed one or two screening/placement assessments for kindergarten, primary, and intermediate students along with the corresponding level of satisfaction for each: 4) Highly Satisfied, 3) Satisfied, 2) Dissatisfied, and 1) Highly Dissatisfied.

Kindergarten Screening/Placement Reading Assessments. Survey respondents listed twenty-seven assessments or categories of assessments that are used in screening or placement of kindergarten students. Table 1 shows seven assessments that each received 5.0% or more of the responses.

Table 1: *Most Frequently Listed Kindergarten Screening/Placement Reading Assessments and Level of Satisfaction*

Category Number	Kindergarten Screening/Placement Assessments	Frequency	Percent	Average Level of Satisfaction (4 = Highly Satisfied, 1 = Highly Dissatisfied)
#1	DIBELS	51	28.2%	3.36
#4	*Leveled Benchmark Passages	30	16.6%	3.26
#10	*Early Literacy Assessments	21	12.0%	3.44
#2	*District Developed Assessments	14	7.7%	3.31
#3	*CORE/Basal Assessments	10	5.5%	3.33
#16	*Northwest Eval. Assoc. Tests	10	5.5%	3.0
#7	AIMSweb	9	5.0%	3.33
Other	20 assessments	5 or fewer	19.5%	

Note. A total of 181 responses were reported by 115 respondents; multiple responses were common. *Category of assessments: full listing in Appendix A

The assessment listed by 51 schools (28.2%) for screening/placement of kindergarten students was Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). Building-level literacy leaders' average level of satisfaction with DIBELS was 3.36, between Highly Satisfied (4) and Satisfied (3). The Leveled Benchmark Assessments category, including the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA, DRA2), Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), leveled literacy passages, and Rigby Leveled Books, was used by 30 (16.6%) respondents. The average level of satisfaction with Leveled Benchmark Assessments was 3.26, slightly further from Highly Satisfied than DIBELS' rating. The Early Literacy Assessment category included a variety of concepts of print, letter and sound recognition, phonemic awareness, and phonics assessments (see Appendix A for full listing of assessments in categories)

Table 2: *Most Frequently Listed Primary Screening/Placement Reading Assessments and Level of Satisfaction*

Category Number	Primary Grades Screening/Placement Assessments	Frequency	Percent	Average Level of Satisfaction (4 = Highly Satisfied, 1 = Highly Dissatisfied)
#1	DIBELS	59	29.4%	3.26
#4	*Leveled Benchmark Passages	42	20.9%	3.39
#16	Northwest Eval. Assoc. Tests	16	8.0%	3.29
#3	*CORE/Basal Assessments	15	7.5%	3.36
#7	AIMSweb	13	6.5%	3.36
Other	23 assessments	10 or fewer	28.%	

Note. A total of 201 responses were reported by 117 respondents; multiple responses were common. Other: less than 5.0% frequency *Category of assessments: full listing in Appendix A

and had the highest level of satisfaction (3.44). Twenty-one building-level literacy leaders, 12.0%, reported use of Early Literacy Assessments while District Developed Assessments were used by 14 schools or 7.7% of respondents. CORE/Basal Assessments (see full listing in Appendix A) and Northwest Evaluation Association Tests (NWEA, MWEA, MAP, and MAP-PGA) were both used in 10 (5.5%) schools, while AIMSweb was used in 9 (5%) schools. These seven assessments or categories accounted for 145 of the 181 (80.5%) responses.

Primary Screening or Placement Reading Assessments. Screening/placement assessments given to primary students, and the level of satisfaction for each assessment were listed next by school building-level literacy leaders (see Table 2).

The two most frequently listed screening/placement assessments for primary students were in the same order as the most frequently used kindergarten assessments—DIBELS (59 schools, 29.4%) and Leveled Benchmark Passages (42 schools, 20.9%). The average level of satisfaction with Leveled Benchmark

Passages was closer to Highly Satisfied at 3.39 than DIBELS's average level of satisfaction at 3.26. Sixteen literacy leaders (8.0%) listed tests from Northwest Evaluation Association, 15 (7.5%) listed CORE/Basal Assessments, and 13 (6.5%) listed AIMSweb. When compared with the kindergarten assessments, the CORE/Basal Assessments and AIMSweb were used with more frequency with primary students.

Intermediate Screening/Placement Reading Assessments. Twenty-seven screening/placement assessments or categories of assessments used with students in the intermediate grades were listed. Table 3 contains 8 assessments or assessment categories that were most frequently listed.

Although the same two assessments, Leveled Benchmark Passages in 27 schools (17.4%) and DIBELS in 26 schools (16.8%), were most frequently listed, their order was reversed from kindergarten and primary

Table 3: *Most Frequently Listed Intermediate Screening/Placement Reading Assessments and Level of Satisfaction*

Category Number	Intermediate Grades Screening/Placement Assessments	Frequency	Percent	Average Level of Satisfaction (4 = Highly Satisfied, 1 = Highly Dissatisfied)
#4	*Leveled Benchmark Passages	27	17.4%	3.22
#1	DIBELS	26	16.8%	3.32
#16	Northwest Eval. Association Tests	16	10.3%	3.38
#3	*CORE/Basal Assessments	13	8.4%	2.62
#19	*Informal Reading Inventories	11	7.1%	3.00
#6	*State Tests	10	6.5%	2.90
#8	STAR	9	5.8%	3.25
#7	AIMSweb	8	5.2%	3.17
Other	19 assessments	7 or fewer	22.5%	

Note. A total of 155 responses were reported by 118 respondents; multiple responses were common. Other: less than 5.0% frequency; *Category of assessments: full listing in Appendix A

Table 4: *Most Frequently Listed Diagnostic Reading Assessments and Level of Satisfaction*

Category Number	Diagnostic Reading Assessment	Frequency	Percent	Average Level of Satisfaction (4 = Highly Satisfied, 1 = Highly Dissatisfied)
#4	*Leveled Benchmark Passages	28	18.9%	3.52
#1	DIBELS	14	9.5%	3.35
#6	*State Tests	13	8.8%	2.64
#3	*CORE/Basal Assessments	12	8.1%	3.11
#7	AIMSweb	12	8.1%	3.67
#16	*Northwest Eval. Assoc. Tests	9	6.1%	2.00
Other	31 assessments	7 or fewer	40.5%	

Note. A total of 148 responses were reported by 114 respondents; multiple responses were common. Other: less than 5.0% frequency *Category of assessments: full listing in Appendix A

grades' screening/placement tests. Northwest Evaluation Association Tests (NWEA), used in 16 schools (10.3%), was the third most frequently used primary and intermediate assessment, moving up from sixth place on the kindergarten assessment list. CORE/Basal Assessments (13 schools, 8.4%) and AIMSweb (8 schools, 5.2%) also appeared on all three lists. Informal Reading Inventories (11 schools, 7.1%), State Tests (10 schools, 6.5%), and the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading–STAR (9 schools, 5.87%) appeared only on the intermediate grades screening/placement list. The State Tests category was defined as tests required by particular states that were not specifically early literacy assessments. The top eight intermediate assessments combined accounted for 120 (77.4%) of the responses. The highest average level of satisfaction (3.38) was awarded to NWEA while the lowest level of satisfaction (2.62) was given to CORE/Basal Assessments.

Diagnostic Reading Assessments

In response to the next research question, "What diagnostic reading assessments are currently used, and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction?" the researchers found that thirty-seven assessments or categories of assessments were listed. School building-level literacy leaders listed up to three key diagnostic reading assessments along with the corresponding level of satisfaction for each assessment. Table 4 summarizes the diagnostic reading assessments.

The most frequently listed diagnostic assessments were Leveled Benchmark Passages, used in 28 schools (18.9%). DIBELS had the second most frequent usage, in 14 schools (9.5%). State Tests were listed third (13 schools, 8.8%) while both CORE/Basal Assessments and AIMSweb tied in fourth position with 12 schools (8.1%). Northwest Evaluation Association Tests, used in 9 schools (6.1%), was the sixth most frequently listed diagnostic assessment. Based on average level of satisfaction where "Highly Satisfied" earned a rating of 4.0, AIMSweb was rated the most positively (3.67), followed by Leveled Benchmark Passages (3.52). The extreme variety of assessments listed in this category is evidenced by thirty-one assessments that were listed seven times or less, while the top six assessments were listed by a total of

Table 5: *Most Frequently Listed Outcome/Summative Literacy Assessments and Level of Satisfaction*

Category Number	Outcome/ Summative Assessment	Frequency	Percent	Average Level of Satisfaction (4 = Highly Satisfied, 1 = Highly Dissatisfied)
#6	*State Tests	59	43.4%	2.74
#1	DIBELS	12	8.8%	3.44
#16	Northwest Eval. Assoc. Tests	12	8.8%	3.33
#3	*CORE/Basal Assessments	11	8.1%	3.11
#4	*Leveled Benchmark Passages	9	6.6%	3.25
Other	20 assessments	6 or fewer	24.3%	

Note. A total of 136 responses were reported by 112 respondents; multiple responses were common. Other: less than 5.0% frequency *Category of assessments: full listing in Appendix A

59.5% of the respondents. Twenty-nine of the thirty-one "other" assessments were listed by one or two building-level literacy leaders.

Outcome/Summative Reading Assessments

"What key reading outcome/ summative assessments are currently used and what are their corresponding levels of satisfaction?" was asked next. Survey respondents listed up to two outcome/summative reading assessments (see Table 5).

While state tests were overwhelmingly the most frequent outcome/summative assessments, listed by 43.4% of respondents, their average level of satisfaction (2.74) fell between "Satisfied" and "Dissatisfied" (see Table 5). The other four assessments, DIBELS, Northwest Evaluation Association Tests, CORE/basal and Leveled Benchmark Assessments combined were not listed as frequently as State Tests, yet all had significantly higher levels of satisfaction.

Reading Assessment Selection and Perceived Efficacy of Use

Six statements included in the survey were specifically targeted to answer how effectively reading assessments meet specified needs. Respondents' ratings provided insight into reading assessment and remediation in the surveyed schools. Table 6 contains the analysis for these statements.

Statement one rated how strongly the reading assessments provided adequate information for progress monitoring. Results indicate a very strong majority of respondents, 92.5% (see Table 6), either agree or strongly agree that the reading assessments used provide adequate information to monitor literacy progress. This is the only statement for which "strongly agree" was the highest response. Moving beyond the ability of the assessments to progress monitor, the adequacy of reading assessments to provide information to diagnose reading weaknesses was rated. Once again, a clear majority, 88.5% of those surveyed, agree or strongly agree that their schools' reading assessments meet this need; however, the results indicate less confidence in the ability of reading assessments to provide information to adequately diagnosis reading problems than to progress monitor.

The perceived competence of school personnel to diagnose reading problems was also rated. Results of the survey (see Table 6) indicate 81.9% agree or strongly agree that school personnel have expertise in diagnosing reading problems. This result is 6.6% lower than confidence that reading assessments provide adequate information to diagnose reading weaknesses. School literacy leaders surveyed have more confidence in the assessments' ability to provide adequate information, than in their personnel's expertise to diagnose literacy weaknesses or reading problems. The statement following diagnosis of the literacy problem was related to school personnel's expertise in remediation. Building-level literacy leaders showed slightly higher confidence in the ability of school personnel to remediate than to diagnose reading problems. The term "school personnel" in the previous two questions was not specifically defined in the survey because those involved in reading assessment and remediation vary by school district.

Common assessments were relatively new in schools, so teachers' efficacy in using these tools to monitor and remediate students' reading skills was surveyed. Strongly agreeing or agreeing that common assessments were effectively used by teachers to monitor and remediate reading skills was reported by 84.3% (see Table 6). Second to school personnel having expertise in diagnosing reading problems, the effective use of common assessments received the most

Table 6: *General Statements Related to Reading Assessment and Remediation*

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. The reading assessments in our school provide adequate information to monitor students' literacy progress.	47.9% (58/121)	44.6% (54/121)	6.6% (8/121)	0.8% (1/121)	0.0% (0/121)
2. The reading assessments in our school provide adequate information to diagnose students' literacy weaknesses.	36.4% (44/121)	52.1% (63/121)	10.7% (13/121)	0.8% (1/121)	0.0% (0/121)
3. Personnel in our school have expertise in diagnosing reading problems.	24.0% (29/121)	57.9% (70/121)	16.5% (20/121)	1.7% (2/121)	0.0% (0/121)
4. Personnel in our school have expertise in remediation of reading problems.	24.8% (30/121)	60.3% (73/121)	11.6% (14/121)	2.5% (3/121)	0.8% (1/121)
5. Teachers effectively use common assessments to monitor and remediate students' reading skills.	21.5% (26/121)	62.8% (76/121)	14.9% (18/121)	0.8% (1/121)	0.0% (0/121)
6. In the last two years, the amount of time spent in reading assessment has negatively impacted the time for reading instruction.	2.5 % (3/121)	16.5% (20/121)	65.3% (79/121)	15.7% (19/121)	0.0% (0/121)

Note. 4—Strongly Agree, 3—Agree, 2—Disagree, 1—Strongly Disagree

Table 7: *Reading Assessments Are Primarily Determined at What Level?*

State	District	Building	Grade	Classroom Teacher	No Response
5.0% (6/121)	46.2% (56/121)	40.5% (49/121)	2.5% (3/121)	4.1% (5/121)	1.7% (2/121)

Note. 5—most influence to 1—least influence

disagree or strongly disagree responses (18.2% and 15.7%, respectively), with the exception of item #6 with reversed responses.

Since the number of reading assessments used in today's classrooms is on the increase, the last statement in this section asked literacy leaders to rate if the time spent assessing students negatively impacts the time for instruction. The results show that reading assessment is considered a valuable component as 81.0% of the building-level literacy leaders did not perceive that it negatively impacts the time for instruction. Considering the amount of testing that happens in today's classrooms, this result is very surprising! The researchers wonder if literacy leaders perceive that effective reading assessments actually increase learning, rather than detract from instructional time, because teaching is more targeted to students' specific needs. Teachers' perspective may vary significantly on this issue. The reverse scale on this item validates that participants read each survey question and did not follow a pattern of rating all statements similarly.

The final question revealed whether reading assessments were determined at the state, district, building, grade, or classroom level (see Table 7).

Based upon the results, it is clear that decisions concerning reading assessments in surveyed schools primarily take place at the district (46.2%) and building (40.5%) levels. Based on the demographic information gathered, consistency of reading assessments throughout districts was reported by 79.8%. Therefore, the results in this survey are representative of numerous additional schools in the districts of the surveyed schools.

Limitations and Recommendations

In survey and questionnaire research, inaccurate perceptions, erroneous question interpretations, and the population researched are potential limitations (Mrug, 2010). To sample a cross-section of elementary school literacy leaders across the United States, a sample of NAESP principals' names was purchased that represented the organization's total membership. To belong to NAESP, membership dues are required, therefore limiting this study to paying members of NAESP. This may have led to sample bias. A second consideration is that respondents to the survey were to rate level of satisfaction of the assessments their elementary schools used in the classroom. Perception of these assessments may be understood differently by each respondent. Third, the response rate in this survey was low, but it is similar to other studies where principals were surveyed (Petzko, 2008;

Reynolds, 2009). The results from this study cannot be generalized to all United States elementary principals' perceptions and use of reading assessment and intervention strategies, but the results can be generalized to active members in NAESP's membership. Another limitation is that qualitative data was not solicited on these survey questions. Future research should be conducted on what reading assessments are used in all 50 states and might include more opportunities for qualitative information from participants. A larger number of participants and a more representative sample from the three types of school districts are desired. Monitoring the emergence of computer-based and online assessments is another area of further research. This survey is currently being replicated with responses from classroom teachers in the same buildings as the initial survey, so their perspectives on assessment can be compared.

Anonymous surveys protect respondents in the study, but also limit the possibility of follow-up with respondents. Further research should be conducted that allows follow-up with participants on their use of reading assessments. This research would be vital in explaining what assessments continue to be used in schools and how reading assessment selection changes over time.

Summary and Conclusions

Overall, elementary school literacy leaders show confidence in three areas: 1) the reading assessments used in their schools provide adequate information to monitor students' literacy progress, 2) the reading assessments provide sufficient information to diagnose students' weaknesses, and 3) that school personnel have expertise in diagnosing and remediating reading problems. Strong district- and building-level involvement in the determination of reading assessments may promote satisfaction and ownership from school personnel administering the assessments. The value placed on reading assessment is shown by the perception that the time spent giving assessments does not negatively impact time for reading instruction.

An additional purpose of the survey was to identify which specific reading assessments are used for what purposes in schools across the United States. The results show that DIBELS, Leveled Benchmark Assessments, CORE/Basal Assessments, AIMSweb, and Northwest Evaluation Association Tests are used for a variety of reading assessment purposes. State Tests are predominantly used as outcome/summative assessment measures and have the lowest level of satisfaction. Several standardized reading

and achievement tests (STAR, Gates-MacGinite, SDRT, SAT 10, WIAT III, etc.) were also listed (see Appendix A), although they were not in the top 5% in any category. An emerging trend of computer-based and online assessments and assessment systems was noted (see Appendix A): AIMSweb, Northwest Evaluation Association tests, SRI, SOARS, YPP, Accelerated Reader, DORA, ESGI, etc. This demonstrates a need for preservice teachers to become familiar with these types of assessments. Overall, building-level literacy leaders are satisfied with the assessments used in their schools, with the exception of State Tests.

Based on frequency, DIBELS, initially tied to federal mandates for Reading First grants, was the most used assessment. It was listed most frequently as a screening/placement assessment for kindergarten and primary grades and it was the second most frequently cited for screening/placement in the intermediate grades. For diagnostic and outcomes/summative assessment, DIBELS was the second most widely used instrument overall. This study supports the wide use of DIBELS, as reported by Goodman (2006) who found that in 8293 schools, over 1.7 million K-3 students, used DIBELS during 2004-2005. Although this survey revealed that some schools use DIBELS for all assessment purposes, it is important to note "no single assessment can serve all the audiences in need of educational performance information" (Farr, 1992, p. 30). Survey results may assist elementary principals in the selection of other frequently used assessments for their schools.

Preservice teachers need training to administer and interpret reading assessments. Selecting which assessments future teachers must be prepared to use is a challenge for reading professors who need to insure that students are prepared to administer reading assessments for different purposes. Hopefully, the results of this survey will assist education professors by identifying the reading assessments that are frequently used in elementary schools across the nation, as well as the level of satisfaction associated with each assessment choice. Based on the findings in this survey, training in the use of computer-based and online assessments and management systems needs to be included in the reading curriculum of early childhood and elementary education programs.

It is crucial that professors of reading are cognizant of the assessments currently used in today's classrooms so they can prepare future teachers to be competent in using assessment instruments to diagnose reading problems. However, assessments should be chosen by experts who know the strengths and weaknesses of each instrument. That duality defines the role of reading professors who prepare students for today's testing environment while educating current and future leaders to make wise choices in the area of selection and use of literacy assessments. Our goal is to prepare students for today's testing environment, while preparing them to influence the future selection of literacy assessments.

Julie Jackson Albee, PhD, Professor of Education at Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri (jalbee@hlg.edu). Research interests include: literacy assessment and remediation, teacher education and supervision, and brain-compatible teaching strategies.

Jill Arnold, EdD, Associate Professor of Education and Director of Online Programs at Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri (Jarnold@hlg.edu). Research interests include: early literacy practices, assessment in early childhood and elementary education, and online education.

Larinee Dennis is an Assistant Professor at Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri (ldennis@hlg.edu). Her current research interests focus on effective educational technology integration and literacy.

Jane Schafer, PhD, Professor of Education, Director of Teacher Education and Graduate Studies at Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Missouri (bscha@hlg.edu). Research interests include teacher education, literacy, and early childhood education.

References

Burke, G., & Wang, Y. (2010). Methods and uses of classroom assessments employed inteaching grades three through five in five school districts in the Mississippi Delta. *Education, 130*(4), 657-665.

Cassidy, J., & Loveless, D. J. (2011). Taking our pulse in a time of uncertainty: Results of the 2012 What's Hot, What's Not Literacy Survey. *Reading Today, 29*(2), 16-21.

Common Core Standards Initiative. (2011). In the states. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states

Farr, R. (1992). Putting it all together: Solving the reading assessment puzzle. *The Reading Teacher 46*(1), 26-37.

Good, R. H., & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds). (2002). *Dynamic indicators of basic early literacy skills (6th ed.).* Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement. Retrieved from http://dibels.uoregon.edu/

Goodman, K. S., (Ed). (2006). *The truth about DIBELS: What it is, what it does*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).

Meisels, S. J., & Piker, R. A. (2000). Analysis of early literacy assessments used for instruction. (Technical Report, No. 2013). Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.

Merkely, D., Duffelmeyer, F., Beed, P., Jensen, S., & Bobys, A. (2007). Using the R2D2 model for creating collaboration among practicing teachers and preservice teachers during reading assessment preparation at four universities. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 15*(4), 463-482.

Mrug, S. (2010). *Encyclopedia of research design* (Vol.3). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2011). About NAESP. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/about-naesp-2

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2008).

Paris, S., & Hoffman, J. (2004). Reading assessments in kindergarten through third grade: Findings from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. *Elementary School Journal 105*(2), 199-217.

Paris, S. G., Paris, A. H., & Carpenter, R. D. (2002). Effective practices for assessing young readers. In B. Taylor & P.D. Pearson (Eds.), *Teaching reading: Effective schools, accomplished teachers* (pp. 141-160). Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum.

Paris, S. G., Paris, A. H., & Carpenter, R. D. (2001). Effective practices for assessing young readers. Findings from the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (Report No. 3-013). Ann Arbor, University of Michigan.

Petzko, V. (2008). The perceptions of new principals regarding the knowledge and skills important to their initial success. *NASSP Bulletin 92*(3), 224-250.

Popham, W. J. (2011). Assessment literacy overlooked: A teacher educator's confession, *The Teacher Educator*, 46(4), 265-273.

Reynolds, A. (2009). Elementary school principals' knowledge and perceptions of research-based substance abuse and violence prevention programs. Ed.D. dissertation, University of the Pacific, United States -- California. Retrieved February 17, 2012, from Dissertations & Theses: Full Text.(Publication No. AAT 3356560).

Stahlman, A. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1990). Formal measures of early literacy. In L. M. Morrow &

J. K. Smith (Eds.) *Assessment for instruction in early literacy* (pp. 7-11). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

United States Department of Education. (2011). *Numbers and types of public elementary and secondary schools from the Common Core of Data: School Year 2009–10 first look*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Education.

Appendix A: List of Assessments

1. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), M Class, Text Reading and Comprehension Screening, (TRC)

2. District Developed Test, district assessment, common assessments

3. CORE/Basal Assessments - category

   Houghton Mifflin Curriculum (basal tests), Scott Foresman Reading Assessment, Core Reading Assessments, Unit tests, Harcourt Storytown, Reading Street Baseline, CORE unit, Section Tests, CORE reading assessment, Book tests, Treasures Placement Test, Corporation grade level assessment

4. Leveled Benchmark Assessments - category

   Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), DRA-2; Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), leveled reading passages; Rigby Leveled Books; benchmark assessments; Kilgore

5. Raz-Kids

6. State Tests - category

   WA State Test (MSP), MAP (Missouri Assessment Program), NJ ASK, NJ PASS, PAWS, MCAS

   NECAP (New England Common Assessment Program) (Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire), PASS (Utah State Reading Assessment), MEAP (Michigan Education Assessment Program),

   MSP (Measurements of Student Progress –Washington State Assessment), PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment), NDSA (North Dakota State Assessment), State Assessment,

   MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System), ITBS-Iowa Test of Basic Skills

   CMT-Connecticut Mastery Test, Maryland School Assessment, CSAP (Colorado State Assessment Program), Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement tests)

7. AIMSweb (assessment system)

8. STAR (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading)

9. Curriculum Based Measures (CBM)

10. Early Literacy Assessments – category

    Early Literacy, Kindergarten Inventory of Skills, Concepts of Print, Observation Survey, Early Screening Inventory (ESI), Marie Clay's, PLSS (Pre-Literacy Skills Screening), Emerging Literacy Survey, Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP); Phonological/Graphophonic Assessment, Letter ID, letter/sound recognition, kindergarten pre-assessment, Early Childhood Assessment Team (ECAT), Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI), Reading Recovery, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening PALS; Kindergarten Early Literacy Assessment (KELA); SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness and Phonics and Sight Words); Phonics, Phonics Screening, QPS-Quick Phonics Screener; Letter naming fluency; ISEL (Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy)

11. Scantron

12. My Sidewalks (4-step assessment plan by Scott Foresman)—Intensive Reading Intervention

13. Gates MacGinite Reading Test

14. SDRT (Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test)

15. Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT)

16. NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association)/ MWEA (MAP-Measure of Academic Progress)-- PGA MAP-PGA (Measures of Academic Progress- Primary Grade Assessment) (computer-based)

17. GRADE (Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation) (standardized test)

18. Woodcock-Johnson-Revised; Woodcock Reading Mastery (WJR)(WRMT) (standardized)

19. Informal Reading Inventories - category

   John's Basic Reading Assessment (BRI); Informal Reading Inventory (IRI); Brigance Reading Inventory; Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI)

20. Gecklings Instructional Assessment

21. Fluency Assessments - category

   Fluency, ORF (Oral Reading Fluency), Nonsense Word Fluency

22. Category moved

23. Special Education Assessment/Corrective Reading

24. Running Record (RR)

25. Brigance

26. Teacher-made tests, teacher made assessments

27. SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory), Reading 180 Routine (computer-based)

28. Read Well Assessment

29. SOARS Student Online Achievement Resources (online program for military families)

30. Galileo Tests

31. Online Assessment

32. LSF (Letter Sounds Fluency)

33. MAZE

34. Wilson Reading

35. YPP (Yearly ProgressPro) online program monitoring research in curriculum-based management (online)

36. Words Their Way (spelling assessment)

37. No baseline

38. OWOCKI (RtI Assessment)

39. CRTS (Criterion-Reference Tests)

40. DRI (Direct Reading Infrastructure)

41. Stanford Reading Achievement, SAT 10

42. 4 Sight (Success For All Foundation Testing Center), Success for All (SFA)

43. WIAT III (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-3)

44. Gort-4 (Gray's Oral Reading Test), Gray's Silent Reading Assessment

45. Acuity

46. Accelerated Reader (computer-based or online)

47. DIAL 3

48. Think Link (Benchmark Learning Assessment Tests)

49. Wide Range Achievement Test-WRAT

50. Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment-DORA (online assessments)

51. Educational Software for Guiding Instruction-ESGI (online assessments)

52. Literacy by Design Reading Placement

53. ISOL testing

54. Lindamood-Bell

55. School Readiness Test-SRT

56. Wiley Blevins Reading Assessment

57. Predictive Assessment Technologies (PAT)

58. Course Level Evaluations-CLE