

Assessing Literacy P–3

Tips and suggestions for a successful entry



A systematic and collective effort is required to meet the needs of students at their current stage of literacy development and ensure that foundational literacy skills are taught and learned in the upcoming school year. This document outlines a process for working collaboratively to gather information on students and to identify those who require literacy support and interventions. This collaboration, along with systematic and explicit instructional response and follow-up, is integral to student learning.

Collaborative Approach to Literacy P–3

The [Inclusive Education Policy \(2019\)](#), states that, “all partners are committed and empowered to work collectively to identify and eliminate barriers that interfere with students’ well-being and achievement”.

The following collaborative approach to literacy invites the creation of a responsive plan to address student literacy strengths and needs. Educational colleagues, working collaboratively, can take an active role in the assessment of students’ literacy skills while recognizing the need to build the classroom community and relationships.

Collaborative Teams Can Help

Collaborative teams may consist of school and regional staff working together to meet the needs of all students and may include the following:

Classroom teacher(s) from French and English programs in schools with both

- Administrators
- Resource teachers
- Literacy learning support teachers
 - Reading Recovery teachers
 - Early literacy support teachers
 - Mentors/coaches

Additional staff, in response to the specific student(s), could include:

- African Nova Scotian student support worker
- English Additional Language (EAL) teacher
- Mi’kmaq support worker

- Learning Disability specialists
- Student Services representatives (e.g., school psychologist, speech-language pathologist...),

Planning for Assessment and Intervention

Communication is an essential part of the collaborative approach to literacy. Administrators can help to facilitate and communicate a collaborative approach to support teachers in P–3 with the early assessment of student literacy.

Collaborative Planning

Classroom teachers may meet with colleagues on the school literacy team to discuss their classroom literacy profile (see example in Appendix A) and develop a plan to support early classroom assessment. The information from the profile can guide the assessment of students. Informal and formal assessments can be administered by the classroom teacher and/or other members of the collaborative team. The plan should consider that a period of orientation to classroom routines will be necessary.

Information Gathering

In September 2020, educators can use familiar assessment processes to determine students' strengths and needs in literacy.

Classroom teachers should assess student literacy skills. They may:

- Complete informal reading assessments like reading records to develop a profile of literacy skills for all students*.
- Select and administer familiar assessments to measure literacy skills as noted in the chart below.
- Provide responsive, explicit, and systematic classroom instruction with a focus on the literacy learnings outlined in [P–3 Literacy Learning](#).

Other literacy educators can support classroom teachers by:

- Assisting in the early completion of assessment information to help support initial instruction.
- Identifying students who require further support.
- Monitoring student progress and determine next steps.

Responsive Classroom Instruction and Intervention

Guided by the needs of students, classroom teachers, teaching support teams*, and other literacy educators, initiate responsive, explicit, and systematic interventions informed by formal and informal assessments.

**Teaching Support Teams*

- *Work with individual teachers to identify opportunities where additional interventions, professional learning, and/or resources may be needed to support student well-being and achievement.*
- *Encourage and enhance collaboration among peers.*
- *Strengthen the capacity to support student well-being and achievement by assisting teachers in developing strategies to meet the core, supplementary, and intensive needs of their students.*
- *Create cultures where teachers feel comfortable seeking advice from their peers and from specialists on effective teaching practices to meet the needs of their students.*
- *Identify opportunities, strategies, and resources to support all school staff in meeting the needs of students.*

(Inclusive Education Policy, 2019)

Progress Monitoring

Literacy instruction and interventions will be framed within a robust system of student supports. Ongoing assessments provide evidence of students' responses to instruction and intervention. This evidence can inform the efficacy of the instruction and further intervention decisions. Literacy instruction should be explicit, and the practice and extension of literacy skills and concepts should be accomplished through integration with other subject areas.

Classroom Assessment Framework, P–3

"Inclusive education practices use evidence of students' strengths and challenges to determine a system of supports and monitor the effectiveness of those supports" (Inclusive Education Policy, 2019, p.2).

Ongoing assessments provide evidence of students' responses to instruction and intervention. This evidence can inform the efficacy of the instruction and further intervention decisions.

Assessments Tools to Support a Collaborative Approach to Literacy

The use of information and data is critical to improving student literacy. The range of assessments below can be used to measure the attainment of literacy skills and provide a springboard for literacy planning, instruction, and interventions.

The following are assessment areas that should be considered by the classroom teacher or other staff when assessing student general literacy skills at this level:

Grade Primary assessments:

- Letter identification
- Independent name writing
- Drawing

Grade 1 assessments:

- Reading assessment*
- Writing Sample
- Oral language
- Phonological awareness

*For students reading below text level 3/C, possible further assessments could include: Letter Identification, Concepts About Print, Word Reading, Writing Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words.

Grade 2 assessments:

- Reading assessment*
- Writing Sample
- Oral language
- Phonological awareness

* For students reading below text level 4/C, possible further assessments could include: Letter Identification, Concepts About Print, Word Reading, Writing Vocabulary, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words.

* For students reading between text levels 5/D and 8/E, possible further assessments could include: Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, Writing Vocabulary.

Grade 3 assessments:

- Reading assessment*
- Writing Sample

*For students reading below a level 17-19/J, possible further assessments could include: Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, Writing Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, a Word Recognition Test.

Responding to Assessment Results

Planning and instruction for all students is based upon the strengths and needs highlighted by both formal and informal assessments. For students who require further support, there may be a need for more comprehensive formal assessments and interventions. The classroom teacher can consult with the collaborative team, Program Planning Team, and/or the Teaching Support Team to determine the next steps in the students' learning plan. The document [Nova Scotia Assessment: Literacy in Grade 3—Lessons Learned](#) provides an example of how to respond to assessment results.

Reference List of Classroom Assessment Tools and Supporting Resources

The table below provides a range of tools which can be used to assist teachers and literacy teams as they assess literacy skills. This is not an exhaustive list of assessment tools but provides some guidance. Schools have an array of assessment tools from which to choose.

Note: Some formal assessment tools can only be administered by a trained individual (i.e., a resource teacher, psychologist, speech and language pathologist, etc.) Should the classroom teacher find that additional assessments are needed to assist in determining the next steps for a student, the teacher should gain the assistance of the Teacher Support Team and/or the Program Planning Team.

Listening and Speaking				
Target Area	Assessment Tools		Supporting Resources	
Oral Language	<p>English</p> <p>Oral Language Continuum Primary</p> <p>Oral Language Continuum One</p> <p>Record of Oral Language New Edition Update by Marie Clay. New Edition</p>	<p>French</p> <p>Le continuum de compétences orales- la maternelle</p> <p>Le continuum de compétences orales - 1ère année</p> <p>Grille d'observation: expression orale et écoute (programme d'études FAL, 2006)</p>	<p>English</p> <p>Let's Get Talking: Oral Language Supports for Classroom Teachers P-2</p> <p>Scholastic Oral Language Kits</p> <p>Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction in a Balanced Literacy Program</p> <p>Let's Play Together</p> <p>Learning Through Play</p>	<p>French</p> <p>Parlons-nous: ressources et liens utiles pour développer l'expression orale</p> <p>Le continuum de conscience phonologique et phonétique</p> <p>Émergence de l'écrit</p> <p>Trousse Scholastic pour la communication orale</p>
Phonological Awareness	<p>A Sound Start A Sound Start: Phonemic Awareness Lessons for Reading Success</p> <p>Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction in a Balanced Literacy Program</p>	<p>Soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde - Les épreuves liées à la conscience phonologique (page 80)</p> <p>Le continuum de conscience phonologique et phonétique</p>	<p>Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction in a Balanced Literacy Program</p> <p>The Fountas and Pinnell Comprehensive Phonics, Spelling and Word Study Guide</p> <p>Units of Study in Phonics by Lucy Calkins</p> <p>Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum</p> <p>The Wonder of Word Study by Lauren Berman Lucht</p>	<p>Miriam Trehearne: Littératie dès la maternelle et Littératie en 1re et 2e année</p> <p>Le continuum de conscience phonologique et phonétique</p> <p>Soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde par Renée Bourgoin</p>

Reading and Viewing				
Target Area	Assessment Tools		Supporting Resources	
Reading and Early Literacy Concepts	<p>English</p> <p>Components of An <i>Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Identification • Concepts About Print • Word Reading Test • Records of Oral Reading <p><i>Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems</i></p> <p><i>PM Benchmark Reading Assessment Resource Kit</i></p> <p><u>Development Reading Continuum P-6</u></p>	<p>French</p> <p>Les composants de « Le sondage d'observation en écriture-lecture »</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification de lettres • Concepts reliés à l'écrit • Test de mots • Fiches d'observation individualisée <p>Soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde - Épreuves : Les lettres majuscules et minuscules (page 81)</p> <p><u>Continuum de développement en lecture pour la maternelle à la 6e année</u></p>	<p>English</p> <p><u>Nova Scotia Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement Lessons Learned</u></p> <p><u>Teaching in Action</u></p> <p><u>Reading and Writing in Grade 3 Lessons Learned</u></p> <p><u>Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum</u></p> <p><u>The Reading Strategies Book</u> by Jennifer Serravallo</p> <p><u>Guided Reading: Responsive Teaching Across the Grades</u> by Fountas and Pinnell</p> <p><u>The Reading Minilessons Book</u> by Fountas and Pinnell</p>	<p>French</p> <p><u>Sondage d'observation du niveau des jeunes enfants en lecture-écriture</u></p> <p><u>Leçons apprises</u> <u>L'évaluation de la Nouvelle-Écosse: lecture et écriture en 3e année (CSAP)</u></p> <p><u>Continuum de développement en lecture pour la maternelle à la 6e année</u></p> <p><u>Soutenir les lecteurs en langue seconde par Renée Bourgoin</u></p> <p><u>Leçons apprises</u></p>

Writing and Representing				
Target Area	Assessment Tools		Supporting Resources	
Writing	<p>English</p> <p>Developmental Writing Continuum P-6</p> <p>What's Next for this Beginning Writer (Reis, Schultze, Petersen, 2005)</p> <p>Independent writing sample marked 1,2,3,4 based on simple rubric</p> <p>Components of An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words Writing Vocabulary 	<p>French</p> <p>Continuum de développement en écriture pour la maternelle à la 6e année</p> <p>Échantillons d'écriture</p> <p>Les composants de « Le sondage d'observation en écriture-lecture »</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entendre et noter les sons dans les mots Vocabulaire d'écriture 	<p>English</p> <p>Teaching in Action</p> <p>P-3 Writing Exemplars Supplementary Resource</p> <p>Reading and Writing in Grade 3 Lessons Learned</p> <p>What's Next for this Beginning Writer (Reis, Schultze, Petersen, 2005)</p> <p>Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum</p> <p>The Writing Strategies Book by Jennifer Serravallo</p> <p>The Write Genre by Lori Jamison Rog and Paul Kropp</p> <p>Units of Study in Writing by Lucy Calkins</p>	<p>French</p> <p>Continuum de développement en écriture pour la maternelle à la 6e année</p> <p>Les premiers pas en atelier d'écriture par Lucy Calkins</p> <p>Le grand livre des stratégies d'écriture par Jennifer Serravallo</p>

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Target Area	Assessment Tools	Supporting Resources	
Listening, Speaking and Writing	English as a Second Language (ESL): Oral Language Proficiency and Literacy Assessment		
Reading	Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems 1 and 2 (Third edition)		