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Primary Reading Assessment—Quick and Easy—

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Abstract

The Dolch Basic Sight Word List is a very valuable tool which can be effectively used by preschool and elementary teachers, (N, K-3), who are involved in the teaching of developmental or remedial reading programs. As may be observed, many inexperienced (and even experienced) teachers are failing to recognize the power of this rather simple but effective tool. It is powerful in that the basic sight word list includes 50 to 75 percent of the words which appear in print. The Dolch List should be readily available and used frequently by all teachers of early developmental and remedial reading programs.



PRIMARY READING ASSESSMENT

--QUICK AND EASY--

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In developmental reading the list can be used by lower elementary teachers in several ways:

1. to drill pupils to recognize these words instantly without the help of any other word attack skill
2. to assess the child's recognition of basic sight words
3. to determine the approximate grade level of pupils who are enrolled in these lower elementary grades
4. to provide teachers with factual information about the child's reading level without the use of highly technical assessment instruments in reading

This instrument can be similarly used by remedial reading teachers in the following ways:

1. to diagnose the word recognition of pupils who begin to show a lack of progress
2. to provide the diagnostician with the approximate instructional level for placement of young children in appropriate graded materials

3. to aid in the assessment of the type or types of miscues made by the pupil, e.g., list and classify all miscues according to commonalities of error in the pronunciation of words

4. to determine what kinds of remediation are necessary to overcome or remove the child's weaknesses in word recognition, e.g., recognizing the difference between a vowel digraph and a diphthong and pronunciation of each

5. to help the diagnostician to determine if the child is improving and attaining the grade level to which he is currently assigned or if the child is reaching the goal established by an individualized educational program (IEP)

Although the results of this instrument indicate only the grade level or entry level in years and not years and months, one can readily approximate whether the child is at the low end, middle, or high end of the grade level by employing the scale which was developed and published by McBroom, Sparrow, and Eckstein (Maude McBroom, Julia L. Sparrow, and Catherine Eckstein, *Scale for Determining a Child's Reader Level*, Iowa City: Bureau of Publications, Extension Division, University of Iowa, 1944, p. 11).

Scale for Determining Grade Level

Dolch Words Recognized Instantly	Equivalent Grade Level
0 - 75	Preprimer or PP
76 - 120	Primer or P
121 - 170	First Reader Level
171 - 210	Second Reader and/or above
above 210	Third Reader and/or above

One can readily interpret this scale in the following manner. Let us assume that the child made a score of 208. Using the scale, we conclude that the child is reading at the second grade level. Further, the child's score indicates that s/he is at the high end of the second grade. Again, one must recall that the score is an approximation of the child's instructional level.

Quite frequently teachers of developmental and remedial reading programs are in need of a simple assessment tool

which is effective and adequate in determining the approximate instructional level of reading through word recognition for children enrolled in the lower elementary grades. The Dolch Basic Sight Word List is the answer to this need. A scale can be consulted to determine the grade level. The basic sight list of 220 words can also be used repeatedly for the same child.

Reference

Dolch, Edward W. Problems in Reading. Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Press, 1948.