CHAPTER 3
FOCUS ON WORD IDENTIFICATION

There was a book lying near Alice on the table, and while she sat watching the White King . . . , she turned over the leaves, to find some part that she could read, "—for it's all in some language I don't know," she said to herself.

—Lewis Carroll

Guiding Questions

Sections I through III of this chapter will help build your knowledge related to word iden-
tification and will prepare you to read and discuss the cases in Section IV. As you read the
sections, consider the following questions.

- What are the ways we identify words?

- What are the phases of word identification?

- How do we assess word identification skills?

- What are the elements of effective word recognition instruction?

- What particular interventions help to develop word identification skills?

INTRODUCTION

While word identification is only one of several factors that influence compre-
hension, it is impossible to construct meaning without first being able to identify
words (Clark, 2004; Pikulski, 1997). Skilled readers, having reached the level of
automatic word recognition, sail through text and only rarely slow down to
navigate an unknown word. Even then, they quickly use their print skills to make
out the word or replace it with a synonym, or perhaps skip it entirely. As long as
their actions maintain the meaning of the text, skilled readers are off once more.
The story is quite different for readers whose word identification skills are lim-
ited. They sputter through text, pulling apart words letter-sound by letter-sound.
Or they substitute words with abandon, using the initial or end sounds as clues,
often settling on a word totally disconnected from the actual one in the text. Like
skilled readers, they may skip a word entirely, but for a very different reason.
They simply have no idea how to go about figuring it out.

In this chapter, you will meet Chad and Kayla. Chad had just completed first
grade at the time of his assessment. At the age of three, he was adopted from
an orphanage in Russia. Kayla had just completed second grade. When
younger, she lived with her grandmother on an American Indian reservation
located in the northern part of the state. The information provided in Sections I
and II and the interventions discussed in Section III should help you make sense
of their cases and guide you toward understanding their abilities and their
needs related to word identification.

Section I: What Do We Know About Word Identification?

What Are the Ways We Identify Words?

Word identification is the process of determining the pronunciation and some meaning of a word encountered in print (Gentry, 2006; Harris & Hodges, 1995). Readers employ a variety of strategies to accomplish this. Ehri (2004, 2005) identified four of them: **decoding, analogizing, predicting,** and recognizing whole words by sight. Each of these will be described briefly.

Decoding is the ability to pronounce the words as the reader encounters them in the text (Samuels, 2002). Typically advancing readers are able to employ a variety of strategies to decode unknown words. Beginning readers may break the words apart, sound by sound, and then blend the sounds together. They may also divide a whole word or a part of a word into its **onset**—the consonants that precede the vowel in a word or syllable—and **rime**—the vowel and consonants that follow it in a syllable (Harris & Hodges, 1995)—and then blend these parts into a recognizable word. Older readers, those beyond the second grade, may use their increasing knowledge about **word structure** (roots, prefixes, suffixes, and syllables) to identify the word.

The ability to decode correctly and consistently requires a working knowledge of the **alphabetic principle**: the concept that there are systematic and predictable relationships between the spoken sounds of our language and the written letters or combinations of letters in our alphabet (Morrow & Morgan, 2006). Indeed, children who do not gain an understanding of this principle in early grades (K–2) are at risk of falling farther and farther behind their peers as the reading demands posed by ever more difficult texts increase (Zimmerman, Padak, & Rasinski, 2008).

Analogizing involves using known words or word parts as an aid for identifying unknown words—if I know the *b* sound in *ball*, and I know the word *cake,* I can identify a new word: *bake* (Barone, Hardman, & Taylor, 2006). Requisite skills for analogizing, or decoding by analogy, as noted by White (2005) and Zimmerman et al. (2008), include the following:

- An understanding of the alphabetic principal
- An understanding of the ways words can rhyme
- An ability to identify initial phonemes (sounds)
- An ability to separate words into onsets and rimes

Ehri and McCormick (2004) added that a store of easily recognized words is essential to reading words by analogy. As a reader's skill increases, the brain, which is essentially a pattern detector, can make easy use of this information to figure out unfamiliar words (Cunningham, 1999).

Predicting involves using letter clues, the surrounding context, and knowledge about syntax to guess what a word might be (Mesmer & Griffith, 2005). For example, consider the sentence, "The old man needed to use his _____ to keep from falling down." The structure of the sentence (syntax) indicates that the missing word is most likely a noun. The entire sentence suggests that the unknown word might be something that helps support the old man. If the initial letter is *c,* this provides an additional hint that the word may be *cane* or *crutches*. Surrounding words, sentences, or pictures may also help narrow the reader's guess.

Predicting from context is important for readers in figuring out the meaning of a word, but it is not always a reliable tool for figuring out the exact word (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). To do that, it is necessary to combine context with the other clues noted previously (Pikulski, 1997). Less skilled readers tend to over-rely on context, producing errors that alter meaning. Imagine, for example, that the reader of the sentence provided in the previous paragraph said *nurse* or *bed* because she looked at an accompanying picture showing the man in a hospital room and ignored word-level cues.

Recognizing words by *sight* is the process of identifying words from memory without analysis. Ehri (2005) noted that educators often use the term **sight word** to describe high-frequency words, words most frequently encountered in print, or irregularly spelled words (those that are phonetically irregular and therefore not easily decoded). In reality, any word that is immediately recognized as a whole is a sight word. Cunningham (1999) emphasized that such instant recognition should be the goal for all readers since this is what allows them to move through text quickly, efficiently, and fluently.

Even skilled readers with large sight word vocabularies will eventually encounter unfamiliar words as they engage with increasingly difficult text. Their ability to use different combinations of the word identification strategies described, without over-relying on any one strategy, sets them apart from their less skilled peers (Pikulski, 1997).

What Are the Phases of Word Identification?

The brain is not prewired to read words. Children must be taught how to find the patterns in print that will lead them to automatic word recognition

(Gentry, 2006). Ehri and McCormick (2004) described the development of word learning as occurring in five phases. In Table 3.1, each phase is briefly outlined in relation to the behaviors children exhibit.

Ehri and McCormick (2004) noted that these phases may overlap and that complete mastery in one phase may not be a prerequisite for a subsequent phase. Still, once the predominant phase has been identified, instruction can be designed to move a reader to the next phase.

Table 3.1   Ehri's Phases of Word Learning (Ehri & McCormick, 2004)

Pre-alphabetic phase	• Little working knowledge of the alphabetic principle (that is, no understanding that letters in words map to sounds) • Focus on nonalphabetical graphic features (reads *stop* upon seeing a stop sign) • Limited to reading words from memory and guessing based on context
Partial-alphabetic phase	• Develops a rudimentary knowledge of the alphabetic principle • Uses letters (usually initial letters) and context to guess unfamiliar words • Knows the consonant sounds whose letter names contain those sounds (b, d, m, p, etc.) • Not yet able to use analogizing as a tool since the sight-word store is not large enough • May not have acquired a strong left to right orientation (reads *was* for *saw*)
Full-alphabetic phase	• Develops good working knowledge of the major sound-symbol correspondences and uses that knowledge to decode unfamiliar words • Can read words by analogy because sight-word store has developed sufficiently • Reading is initially slow and laborious, but speed and facility with words grow as sight-word vocabulary increases and as familiarity with the ways sounds are typically blended to create words increases
Consolidated-alphabetic phase	• Develops solid working knowledge of recurring spelling patterns and commonly occurring suffixes • Easily stores longer words in memory because of ability to recognize word parts in chunks • Develops knowledge about more complex sound-symbol correspondences (e.g., silent e)
Automatic-alphabetic phase	• Recognizes most words in text automatically by sight • Skilled in applying various strategies to attack unfamiliar words

SECTION II: HOW DO WE ASSESS WORD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS?

Ongoing assessment of a student's ability to recognize familiar words and to figure out unknown words is necessary in order to design targeted intervention tied to the student's specific needs. Many tools and processes are available to assess and monitor student progress. Three commonly used assessments are word lists, running records with miscue analysis, and spelling analysis. All of these assessments, when used together, will yield a great deal of information about a student's strengths and weaknesses in identifying words.

Word lists can provide information about a reader's store of sight words, as well as what skills they use quickly and easily to identify unfamiliar words in isolation. A number of **informal reading inventories** containing graded word lists are available commercially (e.g., *Analytical Reading Inventory* [Woods & Moe, 1999]; *Qualitative Reading Inventory* [Leslie & Caldwell, 2000]). Lists of high-frequency words, including the Dolch Word List (Dolch, 1936) and the Fry Instant Sight Word List (Fry, 2001), can be found in many teacher resource guides and can be downloaded from the Internet.

In most cases, the student should begin by reading the lowest graded list, usually the Primer Level, or the words of highest frequency on the selected word list. The examiner should keep track of two scores as the child reads: the percentage of words read correctly within one second and the total number of words read correctly. Those words read correctly in one second have been retrieved automatically from memory, while words that are identified after a longer period of time signal that the reader is using decoding strategies (Caldwell & Leslie, 2009). The examiner should also record unknown words and those pronounced incorrectly, even if the reader self-corrects, making note of what the reader said for later analysis. When using graded word lists from reading inventories, the examiner should stop the student after she or he makes five errors in any graded list. When using high-frequency word lists, Manzo, Manzo, and Albee (2004) suggested, the examiner should stop after the student has missed three out of any four words and ask the child to look down the list to see whether she or he knows any other words.

Next, the examiner should analyze the student's responses. Lipson and Wixson (2003) proposed six questions to consider during analysis:

1. Does there appear to be any consistent pattern of errors?

2. Is the pattern of these errors comparable at each level, or does it change with increasing difficulty?

3. Does the student substitute initial consonants or final consonants?

4. Does the student attend to medial portions of words?

5. Does the student reverse letters or words?

6. What is the student's overall mastery of sight words in isolation? (p. 352)

Careful analysis will reveal the student's ability to decode, analogize, and predict words in isolation. It will also allow the examiner to determine which word-learning phase is predominant for the student.

*Running records with **miscue analysis*** provide additional, rich information about how students identify familiar words and figure out unknown ones when reading extended text. A running record, as originally described by Marie Clay (1993), may be conducted with any text, including those found in reading inventories, since the method for coding miscues in all texts is similar. When using a reading inventory, the student should start reading the graded passage that matches the highest graded word lists in which no errors were made (Woods & Moe, 1999). Reading more difficult passages should continue until the student reads a passage with less than 95% oral reading accuracy or 75% comprehension (generally described as the instructional level) (Barr, Blachowicz, Bates, Katz, & Kaufman, 2007). When using classroom basals or leveled books, the teacher should select several texts representing multiple levels of difficulty.

As the student reads, the examiner should code all miscues, including substitutions, omissions, insertions, self-corrections, repetitions, and teacher-aided words. Following this, the examiner should analyze each miscue to determine which cueing system(s) the child uses—semantic (predicting), syntactic (predicting), or **graphophonic** (decoding/analogizing)—in attempting to identify the word. Lyon and Moore (2003) offered the following principles for analyzing students' errors:

- Analyze errors by considering the difference between what the student said and what was written in the text. For example, if the student read *bit* for *bite,* he or she may not yet recognize the VCe (vowel-consonant-silent e) pattern.
- Look for patterns of error that provide evidence of the predominant phase in which the student is operating (see phases of word identification described previously).
- Look for errors that reveal particular gaps in understanding from an earlier phase.
- Ignore errors that are typically learned in a more advanced phase.
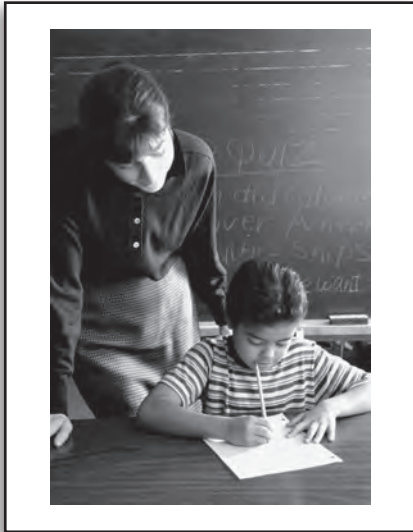
Frequent assessment of children's spelling can reveal what they know about how words work.

Analysis of children's spelling is an excellent way to assess a child's knowledge and use of word identification skills. In order to spell an unknown word, a child must think about its sound and how to represent it using letters and letter combinations (Zimmerman et al., 2008). Children's unaided writing samples and spelling inventories will provide information about a student's knowledge of how words work (Bear, Invernizzi, & Templeton, 2004).

The *Developmental Spelling Test,* created by Richard Gentry for use with students in Grades K through 2 (Gentry & Wallace, 1993), is an easy-to-use tool that provides a snapshot of a child's stage of spelling development. Gentry (2006) also aligned these spelling stages with Ehri's (2005) phases of word recognition (see Table 3.2), making it possible to target appropriate instruction.

Table 3.2   Alignment of Ehri's Phases of Word Learning With Gentry's Spelling Stages

Ehri's Phase Theory for Word Learning (Ehri & McCormick, 2004, pp. 370–384)	Gentry's Levels of Spelling Development (Gentry & Wallace, 1993, pp. 26–35)
Pre-alphabetic: • Little working knowledge of the alphabetic principle (that is, no understanding that letters in words map to sounds) • Focus on nonalphabetical graphic features (reads *stop* upon seeing a stop sign) • Limited to reading words from memory and guessing based on context	Level 1 Precommunicative: • Uses strings of letters without awareness of what the letters represent • No use of letter-sound correspondence
Partial alphabetic: • Develops a rudimentary knowledge of the alphabetic principle • Uses letters (usually initial letters) and context to guess unfamiliar words • Knows the consonant sounds whose letter names contain those sounds (b, d, m, p, etc.)	Level 2 Semiphonetic: • First use of letters to correspond to sounds • Words usually contain correct beginning and ending consonants but are greatly abbreviated

Ehri's Phase Theory for Word Learning (Ehri & McCormick, 2004, pp. 370–384)	Gentry's Levels of Spelling Development (Gentry & Wallace, 1993, pp. 26–35)
• Not yet able to use analogizing as a tool since sight-word store is not large enough • May not have acquired a strong left to right orientation (reads *was* for *saw*)	
Full alphabetic: • Develops good working knowledge of the major sound-symbol correspondences and uses that knowledge to decode unfamiliar words • Can read words by analogy because sight-word store has developed sufficiently • Reading is initially slow and laborious, but speed and facility with words grow as sight-word vocabulary increases and as familiarity with the ways sounds are typically blended to create words increases	Level 3 Phonetic: • Supplies a letter for each sound in a word • Selects letters based on sound only, without attention to conventions of English orthography
Consolidated alphabetic: • Develops solid working knowledge of recurring spelling patterns and commonly occurring suffixes • Easily stores longer words in memory because of ability to recognize word parts in chunks • Develops knowledge about more complex sound-symbol correspondences (e.g., silent e)	Level 4 Transitional: • Uses a chunking system to write—spells mono- and polysyllabic words in parts rather than one letter for each sound • Chunks may represent the sounds in a word, but correct spelling patterns may not yet be present
Automatic alphabetic: • Recognizes most words in text automatically by sight • Skilled in applying various strategies to attack unfamiliar words	Level 5 Conventional: • Most words are spelled correctly, including those with inflectional endings, contractions, compound words, and homonyms • Can think of alternative spellings and knows when words "don't look right" • Has accumulated a large sight word vocabulary

Steps for administering the *Developmental Spelling Test* (Gentry & Wallace, 1993) are as follows:

1. Tell the child that the words may be too difficult for most kindergartners and first graders to spell, so you want her to invent the spelling or use her best guess as to what the spelling might be.

2. Explain that the activity will not be graded as right or wrong, but that you want to see how she thinks certain words should be spelled.

3. Be encouraging and make the activity challenging, playful, and fun.

4. Call out each of the 10 words listed in the chart that follows, read the accompanying sentence, and call out the word again. (pp. 42–43)

Dictated Word	Dictated Sentence
monster	The boy was eaten by a monster.
united	You live in the United States.
dress	The girl wore a new dress.
bottom	A big fish lives at the bottom of the lake.
hiked	We hiked to the top of the mountain.
human	Miss Piggy is not a human.
eagle	An eagle is a powerful bird.
closed	The little girl closed the door.
bumped	The car bumped into the bus.
type	Type the letter on the typewriter.

There are three steps involved in analyzing the results. First, look for features that are prevalent at each of the following spelling stages:

1. **Precommunicative spelling:** Letters may be used for writing words, but they are strung together randomly and do not correspond to sound.

2. **Semiphonetic spelling:** Sounds are represented with letters in a type of telegraphic writing; they are often abbreviated, representing initial or final sounds.

3. **Phonetic spelling:** Words are spelled as they sound; all phonemes are represented in a word, though the spelling may be unconventional.

4. **Transitional spelling:** A visual memory of the spelling pattern is present; conventions of English orthography (the way letters appear sequentially

to create words) are apparent. The word is not just spelled as it sounds—its spelling approximates the visual representation of the word.

5. **Conventional spelling**: Common words that would be written by the typically achieving fourth grade child are spelled correctly.

Second, find the error type that is most closely matched with the error provided in Table 3.3 and write the appropriate developmental stage beside each of the child's spellings.

Table 3.3   Possible Responses to the Developmental Spelling Test

Word	Precommunicative Stage	Semiphonetic Stage	Phonetic Stage	Transitional Stage	Conventional Stage
1. monster	Random letters	mtr	mostr	monstur	monster
2. united	Random letters	u	unitd	younighted	united
3. dress	Random letters	jrs	jras	dres	dress
4. bottom	Random letters	bt	bodm	bottum	bottom
5. hiked	Random letters	h	hikt	hicked	hiked
6. human	Random letters	um	humm	humum	human
7. eagle	Random letters	el	egl	egul	eagle
8. closed	Random letters	kd	klosd	clossed	closed
9. bumped	Random letters	b	bopt	bumpped	bumped
10. type	Random letters	tp	tip	tipe	type

Third, determine the child's developmental level—that is, the level within which most of the child's spellings occur. As an additional check, observe the invented spellings in the child's free writing. It is important to remember that this assessment has been designed to be used with young learners or those new to English and may not be appropriate for older learners who struggle with spelling.

SECTION III: WHAT INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS HELP TO DEVELOP WORD IDENTIFICATION SKILLS?

What Are the Elements of Effective Word Recognition Instruction?

Most researchers agree that, to be effective, instruction must be systematic and explicit and must match the child's developmental level. Systematic instruction involves the teaching of a carefully planned sequence of word elements, moving from simple to more complex concepts (Barone et al., 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; White, 2005). According to Lyon and Moore (2003), "by systematically drawing students' attention to letters, sounds, and words we are providing them with opportunities to do what the human brain does best— look for patterns" (p. 5).

There are a number of ways children learn sound-symbol relationships in instructional settings; no significant differences in their effectiveness have been found (Stahl, 1998). Four of the most common approaches are synthetic phonics, analytic phonics, analogy-based phonics, and multi-strategy instruction. A **synthetic phonics** approach first teaches children the individual sounds represented by letters and letter combinations and how to blend those sounds to pronounce words. Then, the relationships or phonics generalizations that apply are identified (Harris & Hodges, 1995). For example, after the child learns the sounds of the letters /b/, short /a/, and /t/, they can be asked to blend the sounds /b/, /a/, and /t/ to produce the word *bat*.

An **analytic phonics** approach teaches children a store of sight words and relevant generalizations, and then students are asked to apply these to decode unknown words (Barone et al., 2006). For example, after teaching students the words *bat, bus,* and *big,* they can be asked to find the common letter and sound in each word, in this case /b/. An **analogy-based** instructional approach engages students in a study of word families or word parts. They are taught to use parts of words they already know to identify new words (Morrow & Morgan, 2006). For example, children who already know the words *bat, cat,* and *mat* can be asked to use their knowledge of the /at/ sound to identify the words *fat, rat,* and *sat.*

A multi-strategy approach to instruction is based on the concept that good readers use multiple cues to identify words (Strickland, 2005). In this approach, children are taught to use all available clues, including how the word is used in the sentence (**syntactic cues**), what makes sense (**semantic cues**), and how the word looks (graphic cues), to identify a word. Regardless of the approach selected, children must have authentic experiences in reading and writing words

in order to apply their newly learned skills (Barone et al., 2006). Phonics instruction is a means to an end and should never be the dominant element in any balanced reading program (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Explicit instruction requires that teachers clearly state the word identification skill to be taught and model the use of that skill to figure out unknown words (Caldwell & Leslie, 2009; White, 2005). It is possible to begin instruction with an exploration of words, so that the student has an opportunity to figure out or find a pattern on his or her own (e.g., word sorts or making words). However, to be truly explicit, the targeted concept or generalization being studied must be stated to the student at the conclusion of the activity (Mesmer & Griffith, 2005).

As described in the first part of this chapter, understandings about sound-symbol relationships and the ways written words work occur over time. Word learning is developmental, and effective instruction will closely match the child's phase of development (Mesmer & Griffith, 2005). This is especially true of struggling readers. It makes little sense to target word identification instruction that requires capabilities students have not yet acquired. However, once a child's predominant developmental phase is identified, instruction can capitalize on what she or he can do by providing activities that will move her or him from one phase to the next (Ehri & McCormick, 2004).

What Particular Interventions Help to Develop Word Identification Skills?

There are scores of activities that support the development of word identification, and these can be found in texts and online. The general instructional interventions described in the final section of this chapter are appropriate for those students in three of Ehri's (2004) developmental phases. These are the areas beyond the emergent literacy stage (discussed in Chapter 2), and they can help struggling readers who are likely to require explicit and systematic instruction. The content of a particular intervention will need to be modified to match the learner, but the instructional procedures remain the same. For example, the word sort activity described later for students in the pre-alphabetic phase may target beginning sounds or a pre-primer or primer list of sight words, whereas learners in the consolidated phase may be asked to complete sorts that focus on common syllables.

Word Banks and Personal Readers. Individual word banks are flexible and powerful tools that help children build a sight vocabulary, learn high-frequency words, and learn about word patterns (Lipson & Wixson, 2003; Strickland, 2005).

A word bank is a collection of words that a child builds over time by selecting words that she or he can remember well enough to read in isolation (Bear et al., 2004). Each word is written on a small card, and these are stored together, often in a file box or notebook. Regular review that encourages the student to interact with the words, looking carefully at individual letters and sounds, sorting for patterns, and using them purposefully in writing, will help move the student toward automaticity with those words.

Bear et al. (2004) suggested combining the building of word banks with the creation of personal readers. Tying the word bank words to meaningful, familiar texts increases the likelihood that students will thoroughly learn the words. Personal readers are student copies of **language experience charts** built by the class, personal stories that students have dictated to the teacher, and simple texts, poems, or teacher-selected passages. Each personal reader is numbered, and the date it is given to the student is recorded. The student then underlines the words she knows best, and the teacher transfers these to cards that are stored in the student's word bank. Each card is marked with the same number as the personal reader from which it came, allowing the student to match the word bank word to its corresponding item in the reader.

Students add to their individual word banks slowly, but there will come a time when the banks become so large that they lose their usefulness. Bear et al. (2004) offered the following three signs that indicate it is time to discontinue using word banks:

1. The student is at the end of the alphabetic phase.

2. The student's word bank contains at least 200 words.

3. It is possible to create word sort activities in which students recognize nearly all of the words easily. (p. 152)

Sorting. The brain is a pattern seeker (Cunningham, 1999), and sorting helps the brain discover similarities and differences within and across words. Sorting activities are a match for what the brain does naturally. Using picture sorts with learners in the pre-alphabetic and partial alphabetic phases reinforces their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences (Gunning, 2001). As children grow in their understandings about letters, sounds, and words, the teacher replaces pictures with whole words during sorting activities.

Sorting words is an engaging and enjoyable experience that allows learners to analyze and categorize words in a variety of ways. There are two types of sorts: In a **closed sort**, the teacher tells the students what feature to look for in a group of words. In an **open sort**, the students categorize the words

according to features and are challenged to discover the pattern (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). A few examples of categories for sorting are listed in the chart that follows.

Prefix/suffix	Beginning/ending sound
Number of syllables	Long vowel sounds/short vowels sounds
Rhymes	Parts of speech
Onset/rimes	Word roots
Homophones/homonyms	Synonyms/antonyms

Bear et al. (2004) suggested the following four steps when conducting closed or teacher-directed sorts:

1. Demonstrate: Introduce the words by pronouncing, defining, and using each in a sentence. Display key words or pattern cues as column headers; shuffle the cards and explicitly state the category by which students will be asked to sort the words. For example, "Today we are going to listen for the sounds of /an/ and /at/ at the end of these words." Model sorting several words. For example, "This is the word *can*. It has the /an/ sound at the end, so I will put it under the *an* column. This word is *bat*. It has the /at/ sound at the end, so I will put it under the *at* column." Allow students to complete the sort and correct errors immediately.

2. Sort and Check: This part of the activity can be done by students individually or in pairs. Students should reshuffle the cards; select an individual card; name the word aloud; and place it under the correct pattern cue in the column heading. Students may put aside any words that they cannot read. Ask students to rename the words in each column to check for accuracy. For misplaced cards, tell students how many words have been misplaced and in which column, so they can attempt to find them.

3. Declare, Compare, and Contrast: After the second sort is completed, ask students, "What do you notice about the words in each column." The goal is to help students declare their knowledge about the sound, pattern or meaning being explored in their own words.

4. Extend: Students can continue to sort the words a number of times, hunt for similar words, and add the word to their word-study books or word banks. These extensions and others solidify their understandings. (pp. 74–76)

Kathleen Strickland (2005) offered the following five steps for open or student-directed sorts:

1. Provide children with word bags or, alternatively, ask them to use their word banks and lay their words out on their desks or on the floor.

2. Ask them to sort their words into as many different categories as they can.

3. After allowing time to sort words, ask one child to read words from one category.

4. Other students then guess what criteria the child used for sorting.

5. There is no one correct way for open sorts; allow children to come up with their own categories. (p. 67)

Interactive Writing. Pinnell and Fountas (1998) described **interactive writing** as a "teacher guided group activity designed to teach children about the writing process and about how written language works" (p. 191). Interactive writing links word study to writing supporting children's spelling development as well as word knowledge.

During an interactive writing lesson, the teacher guides the students in the creation of a text that might be a classroom message, a story, or a shared experience. Children take turns writing as the text is built collectively. The goal is a product that is error-free, so the teacher spends a good deal of time engaging children in guided discussions of the ways words look and sound as well as the conventions of language. Interactive writing can be used productively across grade levels (Wall, 2008) and should be part of a balanced program that includes ample time for students to write their own texts (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

Cloze. As noted earlier in the chapter, one of the ways we come to identify words is through predicting—that is, using graphophonic, syntactic, and semantic cues to help recognize a given word. Bean and Bouffler (1997) suggested that requiring students to complete cloze passages provides them with opportunities to use these three cueing systems of our language. By controlling for the types of deletions, students may be compelled to focus more heavily on one of the systems. Cloze activities can be done individually or with small or large groups.

Written Cloze. Bean and Bouffler (1997) outlined a four-step process in the *written cloze* activity. First, select a short passage that is within the students' instructional level. Second, leave the first sentence intact and delete words in the remaining sentences at regular intervals (every five or every ten words). When using a controlled cloze procedure, delete graphophonic, or syntactic, or

semantic elements only. Third, have the students complete the passage cooperatively or independently. Following this, discuss each of the missing words and allow the students to compare their responses to the original. Any meaningful word that addresses the element selected for study should be accepted.

Making Words. This activity is hands-on and allows children to explore sound-letter relationships, to look for word patterns, and to realize that changing one letter or a sequence of letters can change an entire word. According to Cunningham and Cunningham (1992), the steps in planning and implementing a making-words activity are as follows:

- Planning for the activity
  - Select a final word, the secret word, for study, considering the letter-sound relationships that can be made and the students' background and interests.
  - Make a list of shorter words, and from these select 12 to 15 words that
    - have a pattern;
    - constitute a mix of both little and big words;
    - use the same letters but can be ordered differently, so that children are reminded that order matters;
    - include a proper name or two requiring capitalization; and
    - are in the students' listening vocabularies.
  - Write the words on index cards, and order them from longest to shortest.
  - Order each of the two-letter, three-letter, and so on, words together, so that patterns and differences can be emphasized.
  - Store cards in an envelope and write the words and the patterns you wish to sort for at the end of the lesson on the envelope.

- Conducting the activity
  - Use a pocket chart that holds each of the large letter cards or large magnetic letters and a magnetic whiteboard. Also, prepare several bags, each with all the letters of the secret word, so that every student has the opportunity to make words.
  - Hold up and name each of the letters (not in order, so as not to give away the secret word), and ask the students to hold up their matching letter cards and then place them in front of them (at their desks or on the floor).
  - Begin with the shortest words. Write the numeral signaling the number of letters in the word on the board and ask students to choose from their letters to make the first word. State the word and use it in a sentence. Check the students' words for accuracy, and ask one child who

has made the correct word to come to the pocket chart and make the same word using the big letters. Ask students to check and correct their word if they made a mistake.

○ Continue through the list of words in this manner, each time letting the students know how many letters are in the word and cueing them as to whether they are to change one letter, move letters around, start with a capital letter, or take all their letters away to begin again from scratch. Each time, state the word and use it in a sentence.

○ When all the words but the final one have been made, ask whether anyone has figured out the secret word. If the word is known, ask one of the students who guessed correctly to make the word in the pocket chart. If the word is not known, say it and use it in a sentence. Then, tell students to use all their letters to make the secret word.

○ Display all of the word cards one at a time in the pocket chart, asking the students to say and spell the words as you do so. Sort these words for the patterns you selected in the planning phase. To do this, hold up one word that contains the pattern, explicitly state what it is, and ask the students to find other words with the same pattern. Line these up so that the pattern is visible.

○ End the activity by asking the children to spell a few new words that contain the patterns you have been exploring with them.

Intervening With Technology. Software and online resources designed to provide multiple encounters with letter-sound correspondences, onset-rime relationships, and sight words can have a powerful effect on the development of children's word identification skills (Sherman, Kleimand, & Peterson, 2004). A few are listed here.

- *Microsoft PowerPoint.* Teachers can teach a variety of word identification skills using Microsoft PowerPoint slides. Images, sounds, and animations easily capture children's attention. Parette, Blum, Boeckmann, and Watts (2009) offered a detailed description of how to prepare and use PowerPoint slides to teach word recognition.
- *Zoodles.com (www.zoodles.com).* A website that contains multiple activities in areas of math, reading, science, and social studies. After registering the child or children on the site, content can be selected matched to the child's age and interests. This website draws content from other sites such as Starfall, PBS Kids, and Between the Lions. The basic membership is free.

Educational software and online resources, if carefully chosen, can support word identification instruction in engaging ways.

- *iPad or iPod applications.* Students can access a variety of applications that provide independent practice in engaging and entertaining ways. One such app is *K–3 Sight Words.* Children can practice Dolch sight words using this application. Words are categorized by grade level, K through 3. Each word appears as a flash card, and the child can click on the listen button to hear it pronounced.

SECTION IV: THE CASES

The two assessment case reports that follow will help you explore the issues related to word identification. As you read, consider the word-learning phase that is predominant for each child, the word identification skills of each, and which interventions might be used to help develop their skills further.

Guiding Questions

Section IV of the chapter will help you apply your understandings about word identification to two particular cases. Read each case quickly to get the gist of what it is about and to identify the issues. Read each case a second time, and when you come to a stop sign in the case, jot down your answers to the following questions:

- What important facts have been revealed at this point in the case?

- Based on what you know so far, what do you think might be going on? It may help to respond to the following prompt: Could it be that . . . ?

- What are the learner's strengths and needs?

- What further assessments or interventions might you try to confirm your ideas?

CASE 1: ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR CHAD B.

Background Information

Child's name: Chad B.
Current age: 8
Current grade level: End of Grade 1

Referral

Chad's first grade teacher referred him to the Reading Center to be assessed. She is concerned that his reading and writing abilities are weak and that he will not be successful in second grade.

Family and Medical History

Chad, an eight-year-old boy, lives on a small farm outside a rural village. His father works at a retail outlet in town, and his mother is a stay-at-home mom. He and his two younger sisters were adopted from Russia when Chad was three years old. His first language was Russian. He continued to speak Russian for the first four months after being adopted; however, English was and is the primary language spoken in his new home.

Chad's adoptive parents report that he and his sisters were placed in a Russian orphanage when Chad was two, due to neglect from their biological

mother. The orphanage followed a rigid schedule, and Chad spent much of his time in large playpens where he was able to interact with other children. At the time of his adoption, he spoke Russian very well for his age. Chad's early medical and developmental history is unknown. He now seems to be in good general health.

Chad's adoptive mother completed a parent survey (see Figure 3.1) indicating that his working memory is weak and that he has recall difficulties. He is able to memorize sight words from flash card drills, but he does not recognize the words if they are presented in a different format. Chad's mother noted that he is generally happy, likes reading, and works well with teachers.

Figure 3.1   Reading Center Parent Survey for Chad B.: Child as Learner

1. What are your child's free-time interests?

   Chad loves art projects, hockey, T-ball, going on adventures in our backwoods.

2. What types of books does your child enjoy?

   He likes to be read any book. He enjoys reading books that he knows he is capable of reading without difficulty.

3. What types of writing does your child do at home?

   We have done letter practicing to improve his penmanship with great results.

4. What are your observations about how your child learns?

   He learns better one-on-one and with repetition. With his learning disabilities, we know he suffers from short working memory. If he gets frustrated and you can get him through that calmly he can continue on.

5. What are some other things you would like us to know about your child?

   We adopted our son and his two siblings from Russia. He spoke Russian very well for his age. He is generally a happy kid and willingly works with all his teachers, paraprofessionals. Very Honest.

6. In what ways do you think we can best help your child?

   Chad has difficulty even remembering the basic sight words. He can know them on flash cards but if they are put onto a piece of paper or printed on another flashcard in a different color he struggles many times with knowing that word. He loves math and does good at adding, subtracting, even fractions. Trouble with counting money and telling time on a clock. We are tutoring him with his current teacher to help him get a grasp of things preparing him for second grade.

School History

Chad has just completed first grade in a K through sixth school located in a rural, upper Midwest community. During the school year, he received an additional 30 minutes of reading instruction per day. His classroom teacher reported that he loves to listen to stories, has a keen sense of empathy, and has even memorized the texts of stories he has heard repeatedly. However, he has not mastered all letter-sound relationships and his fluency fluctuates daily. While he has many ideas for writing, written expression is a challenge. During reading time, he receives individual support in phonics and currently reads from a pre-primer level text. The 45-minute daily writing workshop provides him with individualized support. (See Figure 3.2 for the complete response.)

Figure 3.2 Classroom Teacher Referral Form for Chad B.

1. Please describe the nature of the child's reading and writing. What does this child do well, and in what areas do you perceive weakness?

   Chad loves to listen to stories. He has a keen sense of empathy. He notices emotional parts of a story and is touched by them, much more than his peers. He remembers stories he has heard to the point where he has memorized the text. Chad has not mastered all letter-sound relationships, which causes him great stress in reading and writing. It sometimes appears as if looking at these symbols is painful for him.

   He has great ideas to write about, but to get them on paper so anyone else understands is a challenge. He was once writing facts about the Snowy Owl. He wrote this: "The Snowy Owl flies softly so the mice do not hear him." That is pretty awesome for a first grader, but only the teacher that helped him could have deciphered it, and Chad can't always remember it. Chad loves to draw and his illustrations match his written ideas.

2. Instructional strategies, activities, etc., used with this child.

   In the classroom, we work individually with Chad to reinforce, review, and encourage his learning of letter-sound relationships and phonic skills. Many visual cues and songs are used for association. He is currently reading from the 1.1 pre-primer book. (Chad's fluency really fluctuates with the day, but he joins the rest of the class to listen/join in on the literature they are reading.) We have writing workshop for 45 minutes. He receives lots of individual support and encouragement here as well.

The Title I instructor reported that, after a lot of repetition, Chad is able to memorize sight words. Sounding out words is difficult for him, and he spends a lot of time decoding, so his fluency is often compromised. He can, however, read through familiar books very quickly and accurately on some days.

Comprehension is good if stories have been read to him first. (See the full report in Figure 3.3.)

Chad's IEP (Individualized Educational Plan), completed in May, was given to the Reading Center examiner. The report stated that Chad's working memory is below that of his age-equivalent peers and that his expressive vocabulary skills are below average. He makes occasional errors in letter sounds and has particular difficulty pronouncing multisyllabic words. Still, according the assessment results, his articulation and phonological awareness skills are typical of those of an end of first grader.

Figure 3.3   Title I Teacher Referral Form for Chad B.

1. Please describe the nature of the child's reading and writing.

   Chad has memorized sight words with a lot of repetition. Sounding out can be difficult as he has a tough time associating sounds with some of the letters. Since he spends a lot of time decoding words, his reading can be choppy. Chad can read through books he knows very quickly and accurately on some days, some days he needs more time. Comprehension is good, especially after stories have been read to Chad first.

2. Please describe any strategies, materials, or activities that have been used with this child.

   In addition to classroom word-attack strategies, it has been recommended for Chad to use flashcards with the word and a picture, then to cut the picture off once he has the word down. Chad's parents practice reading with him at home, and he is also receiving reading instruction from the resource room teacher.

3. What is the child's attitude toward reading and school in general?

   When Chad becomes frustrated with school or reading, in general, it shows as he becomes angry, or we say "crabby." When teachers talk to him about "attitude," his mood changes or improves.

4. Is this child receiving special services of any kind?

   Title I Reading 30 min./day

Any comments or suggestions?

Chad would benefit from additional practice over the summer to retain the skills he has learned. He would benefit from more exposure to sight words as he needs repetition to memorize them.

STOP

Detailed Assessment Information

Session 1

Interest Survey. The examiner asked Chad the questions on the interest survey (Hill & Ruptic, 1994, pp. 175–176) and wrote down the following answers as he spoke:

- Chad is an active child who enjoys playing basketball, T-ball, and hockey and wants to be an explorer when he grows up.
- His favorite subject is reading because he likes "learning about stuff." However, he doesn't like reading when it is hard.
- When asked about his reading goals, he said he wants to learn more words so that he can become a better reader.

Chad answered the interest interview questions very quickly. Sometimes his answers didn't make sense, and so the examiner reworded the questions to be sure she understood what Chad meant.

Attitudes About Reading and Writing. The examiner read the Garfield Writing Attitude Survey (Kear, Coffman, McKenna, & Ambrosio, 2000) to Chad first and, after a brief snack break, followed up with the Garfield Elementary Reading Survey (McKenna & Kear, 1990). Chad's percentile rank on the Writing Attitude Survey was 63. On the Reading Survey, his full scale percentile rank was 46, with a clear preference in recreational reading (65th percentile) over academic reading (34th percentile). For both surveys, Chad circled many of the responses before the examiner had completed the statements. Also, he interrupted several times to ask the examiner unrelated questions.

STOP

Session 2

Burke Reading Interview (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 1987, pp. 219–220). The examiner recorded Chad's answers to the 10 questions on the interview (see Figure 3.4). It was clear that Chad felt that he had only one strategy as a reader: to ask for help. Interestingly, however, he rated himself as a terrific reader.

Figure 3.4   Burke Reading Interview Results for Chad B.

1. When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

   Ask for help

2. Do you ever do anything else?

   Ask a friend

3. Who do you know who is a good reader?

   Adriana (a school friend)

4. What makes him/her a good reader?

   I don't know

5. Do you think she/he ever comes to a word she/he doesn't know when reading?

   Yes

   If your answer is yes, what do you think she/he does about it?

   Asks for help

6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn't read well?

   Ask someone for them (ask someone for help for them)

7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?

   I don't know

8. What would you like to do better as a reader?

   Read words better, listen better

9. Describe yourself as a reader.

   I read good, read easy words good

10. Using a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being a terrific reader, what overall rating would you give yourself as a reader?

    5

Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2001). Based on the information gained from surveys, and in keeping with the DRA guidelines, the examiner selected four DRA texts at Levels 1 through 4 for the formal assessment. These texts were in the kindergarten range and the equivalent of Guided Reading Levels A through C (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Chad's predictions about the Level 1 book provided evidence that this text would be at his independent level, so the examiner began with a Level 2 book, *Bath Time* (DeLapp, 2002a). His accuracy rate in this 34-word predictable text was 94%, with two miscues and two self-corrections. His first attempt for the word *purple* was *pink*. He looked at the picture and self-corrected the miscue. A bit later on, he substituted *purple* for *pink* but again looked at the picture and corrected the error. He had one omission (*I* at the beginning of a sentence) and one substitution: *bubbles* for *bath*.

Because he seemed comfortable, and because this text appeared to be at his instructional level, the examiner continued on to Level 3. Chad completed the picture walk for *Look at Me* (DeLapp, 2002c) and was able to make several feasible predictions. He read the text with 90% accuracy. His retelling was limited and required a good deal of prompting from the examiner. A summary of the DRA Observation Guide is provided in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5   Summary DRA Assessment for Chad B.

Text: *Look at Me: Level 3* (Grade Level Equivalent K, Guided Reading Level C)

Previewing and Predicting Response (after completing a picture walk):

Chad gathered enough information to make several appropriate predictions.

Oral Reading Miscues			
Page/Line	Text Words	Words Said	Error Type
10/1	said the boy	the boy said (counted as 3 errors)	Substitution
12/2	We	Will	Substitution
12/2	rope	rup	Substitution
12/3	said	sad	Self-correction
Total Errors: 5 Accuracy: 90% Total Self-Corrections: 1			

Fluency

Chad read in short phrases most of the time with some intonation.

At Difficulty

Chad used picture clues heavily and some phonics knowledge (initial sound) when he came to difficult text. He paused at *slide* saying s—lide and at *skate* saying s—kate.

Comprehension (Score of 9: Very Little Comprehension)

Chad was able to list the characters and understood the setting when prompted. He was able to retell what happened at the very beginning of the story when asked, but provided minimal responses. He was able to relate his favorite part of the story: *When the girl said, "look at me, I can rollerblade,"* although the word *skate* was used in the text. He was not able to make any connections, and when asked, "*What did the story make you think of?*" he responded, "*Nothing.*"

Additional Examiner Notes

I wonder whether Chad's retelling was poor because he was getting antsy and wanted to be done? We had only been working for 15 minutes at this time, but he seemed tired.

STOP

Session 3

Informal Writing Assessment. After reading the book *I Like Me* (Carlson, 1990), the examiner asked Chad to write a completion of the prompt "I like . . ." as many times as he could think of responses. He wrote five sentences (see Figure 3.6) and made multiple spelling errors.

The examiner wanted to see what spellings Chad would produce in an unprompted text and so asked him to write, unaided, about something he had done recently. He wrote one sentence ("I am working with my tractor.") and drew a picture (see Figure 3.7).
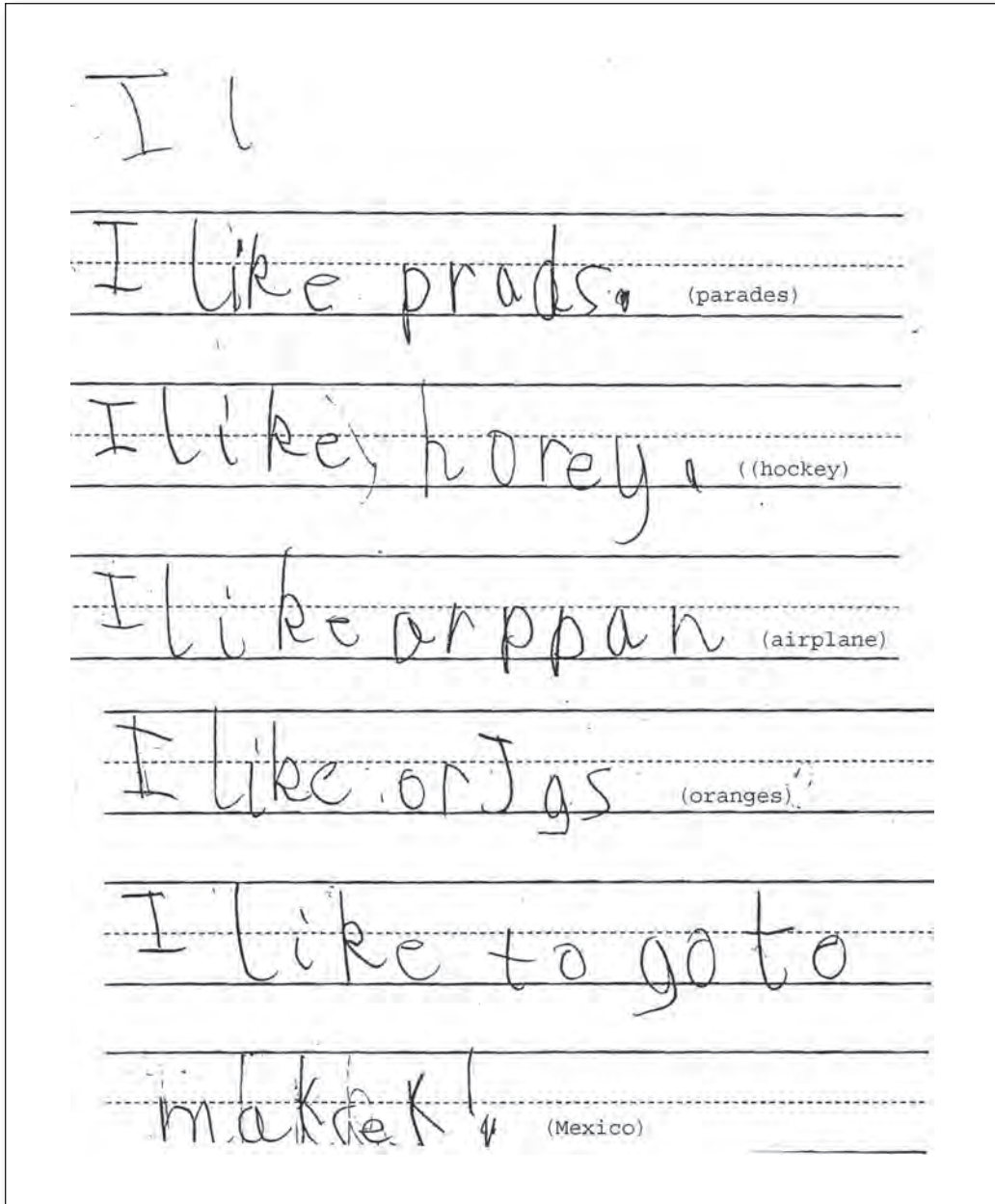
Figure 3.6 Informal Writing Assessment for Chad B.

I l

I like prads. (parades)

I like horey. ((hockey)

I like orppan (airplane)

I like orJgs (oranges)

I like to go to

makiek (Mexico)

Figure 3.7 Unprompted Writing Sample of Chad B.

STOP

Session 4

Informal Letter Sounds Assessment. Based on the results of the writing task, the examiner decided to assess Chad's knowledge of letters and letter sounds. Chad identified all 26 of the uppercase letters and 25 of those in lowercase. When trying

to identify some of the letter names, he sang the alphabet song. He did not recognize the letter *d*. He identified 20 of the 26 sounds. The errors he made were as follows:

- For E and Y, he said he didn't know the sounds.
- For T, he said *it*.
- For U, he said the long *e* sound.
- For X, he said *n*.
- For C, he said *ch*.

It took him a long time to complete this assessment.

Developmental Reading Assessment (Beaver, 2001). Although the Level 3 text Chad had read in Session 2 was at his frustration level, the examiner wanted to further explore his word recognition strategies and so selected a Level 4 text, *Get Your Umbrella* (DeLapp, 2002b). Chad completed the picture walk, making many appropriate predictions. He made miscues, including omissions, substitutions, and one insertion. He seemed to attend to beginning sounds or picture cues to help him identify words. His oral reading accuracy was at 87%. He read word-by-word in a monotone voice. Interestingly, he was able to retell all of the key events in sequence with only one prompt and referred to the characters by name. A summary of the DRA Observation Guide is provided in Figure 3.8.

Additional Information

Examiner Anecdotal Notes

After Session 1. While I was reading aloud to relax Chad before beginning with the more formal assessments, he began to get antsy and kicked his sandal off. I am not sure if he has to fiddle while he is listening or just has a hard time sitting. After the interest survey, I read aloud from a different book. While I read, he started playing with a pointer that I have that is in the shape of a flower. I continued to let him play with it because I wanted to see if he was still able to listen. He correctly answered all of the questions that I asked during and after reading.

Case Recap:

1. Review the case and the notes you have taken in response to the guiding questions one final time, and add or revise any information you may have missed.

2. Make a list of additional questions you have about the case. What further information do you need that might be explored in the case discussion?

3. Think about Chad's early language experiences. To what extent might his first language (Russian) be affecting his reading development?

Figure 3.8 Summary DRA Observation Guide for Chad B.

Text: *Get Your Umbrella* (Grade Level Equivalent K, Guided Reading Level C)

Previewing and Predicting Response (after completing a picture walk): Gathered enough information to make several appropriate predictions.

Oral Reading Miscues			
Page/Line	Text Words	Words Said	Error Type
2/1	rain	rain	Repetition*
2/1	said	said	Repetition
3/1	Kim	——	Omission
5/1	kitchen	chair	Substitution
5/2	it	is	Substitution
5/2	is	the	Substitution
5/2	——	umbrella	Insertion
5/2: The phrase in the text read *Here it is.* Chad said*, Here is the umbrella.*			
6/1	Dad	——	Omission
6/1	——	said	Insertion
Total Errors: 7—Accuracy: 87%			
Total Self-Corrections: 0			

*Repetitions are noted, but not counted as errors.

Fluency

Chad read in a monotone, mostly word-by-word but sometimes in short phrases.
He used some intonation and attended to punctuation some of the time.

At Difficulty

Chad used picture clues, attempted to sound out unknown words, and paused several times when reading.

Comprehension (Score 22: Very Good Comprehension)

Chad's retelling was complete and correct. He referred to the main characters by name and included many details from the story. His interpretation of the story was at the literal level. The examiner used only one prompt to guide Chad's retelling.

Additional Examiner Notes

Chad blew me away on this one. He told me every event in the order that it happened. I was amazed. When I asked him what his favorite part of the book was he said it was when Dad told Kim the sun was out.

CASE 2: ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR KAYLA E.

Background Information

Child's name: Kayla E.
Current age: 8
Current grade level: End of Grade 2

Referral

Kayla's second grade teacher and her mother referred her to the Center for assessment.

Family and Medical History

Kayla, an eight-year-old girl, lives with her mother and stepfather in a small city with a population of 57,000. Her father lives and works on an American Indian reservation in the north central part of the state. She spends weekends with him occasionally. Kayla, a Native American, lived on the reservation with her grandmother for a time when she was younger. The primary language spoken in both homes is English. There are no physical concerns; however, she was tested for an emotional disorder the previous year and results indicated possible difficulties with anxiety, depression, and attentiveness.

Kayla's mother completed the survey *My Child as a Learner*. She described Kayla as a physically active child with a "great imagination." She noted that she lacks confidence in reading and no longer enjoys it. She does, however, enjoy telling stories and will expand on the real things that have happened to her. See Figure 3.9 for complete information.

School History

Kayla has just completed second grade in a K through fifth school located in a neighborhood in the north end of the city. She received Title I services in reading for all of Grade 1 and the first part of Grade 2. She was tested for learning disabilities and was found to have deficits in reading, writing, and speech. Her cognitive functioning, communicative status, motor ability, sensory status, and health and physical status were all reported to be within the average range. She now receives special education services for reading and speech.

Kayla's teacher reported that she has improved as a reader and writer since the beginning of the school year but is still at the emergent level. She noted that Kayla is not a risk taker; if unsuccessful, she "shuts down." (See the full survey response in Figure 3.10.)

Figure 3.9   Reading Center Parent Survey for Kayla E.: Child as Learner

1. What are your child's free-time interests?

   She loves sports: baseball, soccer, floor hockey, kickball, riding bike, skate boarding, and she also likes to watch the cartoon network.

2. What types of books does your child enjoy?

   Books about spiders, animals, Fantasy (Harry Potter)

3. What types of writing does your child do at home?

   She is always leaving notes for me or play notes when pretending to be spy.

4. What are your observations about how your child learns?

   She learns best in one/one settings. She is very visual and kinesthetic.

5. What are some other things you would like us to know about your child?

   She has a great imagination and loves to expand on "real" things that have happened.

6. In what ways do you think we can best help your child?

   I feel any extra reading practice, strategies, or fun would be great for her confidence and self-esteem. If she reads something and it doesn't make sense, she'll say it out loud and try to figure out what doesn't fit. She is not very confident at all. She often says she can't.

Figure 3.10   Classroom Teacher Referral Form for Kayla E.

1. Please describe the nature of the child's reading and writing.

   Kayla is an emergent reader and writer. This is a big improvement since fall. She is quite a visual learner. She will take more risks in writing.

2. Please describe any strategies, materials, or activities that have been used with this child.

   Basic sight words, phonic skills, repetitive story lines, small group and one-on-one

3. What is the child's attitude toward reading and school in general?

   Not consistent in risk-taking. Wants to be successful and if isn't she shuts down.

Figure 3.10 (Continued)

4. Is this child receiving special services of any kind?

   LD: Reading and Speech-language: language expressive; concept, verb tenses, etc.

Any comments or suggestions?

Has low self-esteem in reading—is feeling more like a reader but needs early success to stay motivated.

STOP

Detailed Assessment Information

Session 1

Interest Survey. When the examiner asked Kayla to complete the *About Me* survey, she initially worked independently, but as soon as she encountered a word she did not know, she abruptly stopped and asked for help. With the examiner at her side, she completed the survey. She noted that her favorite book was *The Cat in the Hat* (Seuss, 1957). She told the examiner that the "*Cat In the Hat* books" are the only ones that she reads. She likes to spend her free time watching TV and playing sports. See the full survey response with Kayla's own spellings in Figure 3.11.

Attitudes About Reading and Writing. The examiner asked Kayla to complete the Garfield Reading and Writing Attitude Surveys and read each item to her. Kayla circled each item quickly and impatiently, wanting to end the task as quickly as possible. On the reading survey, her full scale percentile rank was 54; however, she showed a preference for academic reading (57th percentile) over recreational reading (50th percentile) when compared with midyear second grade students. Her percentile rank on the writing survey was 36 when compared with midyear second grade students. The most negative responses (scored 1 out of a possible 4) were for items that asked about making revisions in her writing.

Figure 3.11 *About Me* Interest Survey for Kayla E.

I live with *my mom and stepdad.*

When I get home from school I like to *woh* (watch) *TV.*

My favorite TV show is *dinse chanl.*

My favorite movie is *hare potr.*

I participate in sport called *soff Ball.*

I spend time on my hobby, which is *TV*

My favorite subject in school is *resis* (recess) *mahs* (math).

My favorite thing to read is *cat in the hat.*

Topics I like to read about include *cat in the hat.*

My plans for my future include *go Back to cile* school.*

Other things about me that I'd like to share are *spost* (sports) *tinisis* (tennis).

*This was the name of the school; the "c" should have been the letter "k" and the "e" a "y."

Burke Reading Interview. The examiner read the prompts from the reading interview and dictated Kayla's responses. Although she rated herself as a "terrific reader," other responses indicated that she used few strategies when faced with challenging text: "give up," "ask for help," or "pick another book." (See Figure 3.12 for the complete survey results.)

Session 2

High-Frequency Word List. The examiner began Session 2 by asking Kayla to read from a list of high-frequency words. This particular word list, used in the Reading Center for almost two decades, was subdivided into lists ranging from pre-primer through seventh grade. Kayla read all 42 words in the pre-primer list correctly. She read 91% of the primer list correctly and made the following errors:

- *down* for *did*
- *lunch* for *laugh*
- *now* for *new*

Figure 3.12   Burke Reading Interview Results for Kayla E.

1. When you are reading and come to something you don't know, what do you do?

    Nothing, give up

2. Do you ever do anything else?

    Ask for help

3. Who do you know who is a good reader?

    My teacher

4. What makes him/her a good reader?

    She can read chapter books.

5. Do you think she/he ever comes to a word she/he doesn't know when reading?

    No, I don't think.

    If your answer is yes, what do you think she/he does about it?

6. What do you think is the best way to help someone who doesn't read well?

    Ask a teacher

    Read a different "just right" book.

7. How did you learn to read? What do you remember? What helped you to learn?

    I don't know. In kindergarten we read books. My cousin read to me. My teacher helped me, telling us words, reading the pictures.

8. What would you like to do better as a reader?

    Memorize what I read and learn what words mean.

9. Describe yourself as a reader.

    Read the Cat in the Hat books.

10. Using a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being a terrific reader, what overall rating would you give yourself as a reader?

    5

She omitted *what*. When she read the first grade list, she slowed down considerably even though the examiner encouraged her to move along. She read 75% of the words correctly but made several omissions and errors, as shown in the chart that follows:

Omissions	Errors
• around • cold • could • every • first • our • pretty • round • why	• *eat* for *ate* • *be* for *by* • *fat* for *far* • *ho* for *how* • *now* for *know* • *where* for *were*

Her frustration increased as she read through the second grade list, omitting 29 of the 59 words. She made one error, reading *dirt* for *draw*. Her accuracy rate was 49%.

Developmental Spelling Test. Because of the inconsistency of her spellings on the interest survey, the examiner wanted to determine Kayla's developmental stage and so administered the *Developmental Spelling Test* (Gentry & Wallace, 1993). The results of the test are displayed in Figure 3.13. Kayla is primarily at the *phonetic spelling* stage.

Figure 3.13   Developmental Spelling Test Results for Kayla E.

Word Dictated	Word Spelled	Stage
1. monster	mostr	Phonetic
2. united	unitdid	Phonetic
3. dress	dras	Phonetic/Transitional
4. bottom	Botm	Phonetic
5. hiked	hikt	Phonetic

(Continued)

Figure 3.13 (Continued)

Word Dictated	Word Spelled	Stage
6. human	hemin	Phonetic
7. eagle	egl	Phonetic
8. closed	clos	Phonetic
9. bumped	Bumt	Phonetic
10. type	tipt	Phonetic

*Source:* Adapted from *Teaching Kids to Spell,* by J. Gentry and J. Wallace, 1993, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

STOP

Session 3

Informal Writing Assessment. The examiner also wanted to see what spellings Kayla would produce in her own text and so asked her to write a journal entry about anything she wanted. Her entry was about a dog named Casey (spelled *case*). She wrote the equivalent of seven sentences but used end punctuation only twice. Her misspellings were as follows:

- *Munda* for *Monday*
- *win* for *when*
- *gud* for *good*
- *vey* for *very*
- *spish* for *special*
- *lwisd* for *always*
- *ranovr* for *ran over*

She also used *he* for *him* twice. Her writing sample is provided in Figure 3.14.

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Based on the information gained from surveys, and in keeping with the DRA guidelines, the examiner selected DRA texts at Levels 10 through 14 for the formal assessment. These texts were in the first grade range and the equivalent of Guided Reading Levels E through H (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). From among these, Kayla selected *The Wagon* (Maione, 2006) as a "just right" book for her. She completed a picture walk and

Figure 3.14   Unprompted Writing Sample for Kayla E.
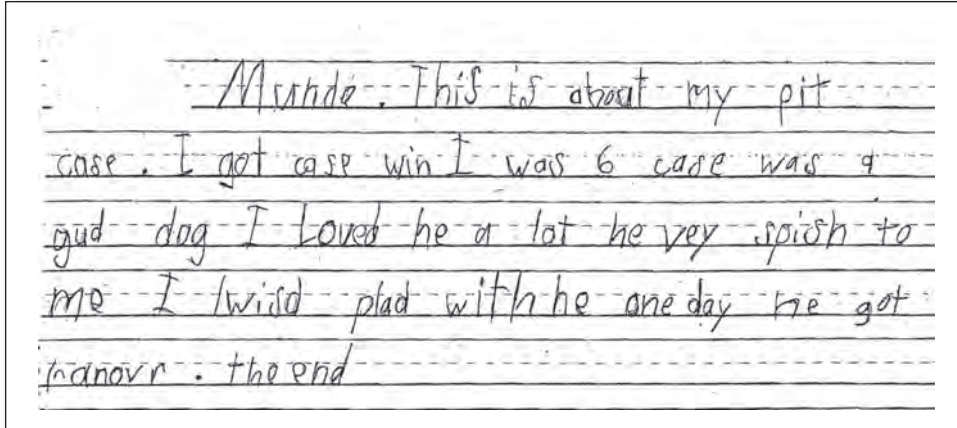
was able to label events and actions logically without prompting. Her accuracy rate for this 203-word text was 91%, with 18 miscues and two self-corrections. All but one of the miscues was a substitution. For the majority of miscues, she seemed to attend to the beginning sounds to identify the words. Her oral reading was rather monotone, and she yawned several times as she moved through the passage. Still, her retelling was complete. A summary of the DRA Observation Guide is provided in Figure 3.15.

Figure 3.15   Summary DRA Observation Guide for Kayla E.

Text: *The Wagon: Level 14* (Grade Level Equivalent 1, Guided Reading Level H)

Previewing and Predicting Response (after completing a picture walk):

Kayla gathered pertinent information and connected events and actions with no prompting.

Oral Reading Miscues			
Page/Line	Text Words	Words Said	Error Type
2/2	He	His	Substitution
2/2	was	used	Substitution

Figure 3.15 (Continued)

2/3	newspapers	new superpaper new papers	Substitution
3/3	a	——-	Omission
4/2	other	ol older other	Self-correction
4/4	He	The	Substitution
4/4	covered	gravel	Substitution
4/4	with	white	Substitution
4/4	dirt	dirty	Substitution
4/4	sticks	snake	Substitution
4/4	Line of Text: He covered it with dirt and sticks. Kayla's Reading: The gravel it white dirty and snake.		
5/4	dirty	rusty	Substitution
6/3	bucket	brush	Substitution
6/4	other	older other	Self-correction
7/1	They	then	Substitution
7/1	washed	was	Substitution
7/2	dents	dirts	Substitution
7/3	nice	new	Substitution
7/4	better	brand	Substitution
7/4	than	then	Substitution
7/4	new	now	Substitution
Total Errors: 18 Accuracy: 91% Total Self-Corrections: 2			

<u>Fluency</u>

Kayla read word-by-word and occasionally in short phrases and in a monotone.

<u>At Difficulty</u>

Kayla used picture clues heavily, paused often, and sometimes reread.

<u>Comprehension (Score of 16: Good Comprehension)</u>

Kayla was able to retell most of the events of the story in sequence and included many details without prompting. She responded with literal interpretation of the story and responded adequately to one teacher prompt. The second prompt, *What does this story make you think of?* elicited a lengthy story about a water-gun fight with her cousin that was not connected to the story.

<u>Additional Examiner Notes</u>

I think Kayla may perform better when she is not observed formally. She's hard on herself and gets mad at herself when she makes mistakes.

Case Recap:

1. Review the case and the notes you have taken in response to the guiding questions one final time, and add or revise any information you may have missed.

2. Make a list of additional questions you have about the case. What further information do you need that might be explored in the case discussion?

3. Consider whether there is a difference in Kayla's word identification skill when she reads words in extended texts versus word lists.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the importance of word identification in the reading process. Learning to identify words quickly and effortlessly is a critical element, and without it, the ultimate goal—reading for meaning—cannot be reached. It is important to remember, however, that studying words in isolation is not sufficient to improve children's reading of texts. A well-balanced instructional routine must also include plenty of reading in authentic texts and writing for real purposes. With such a routine, students like Chad and Kayla will have a better chance of gaining all of the skills necessary to develop into independent readers. The next chapter focuses on fluency, an element in reading development that has grown in importance in the last decade.

Terms highlighted in this chapter

FINAL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND RESPONSE

1. Review the phases of word learning presented at the beginning of this chapter and determine which phase is predominant for Kayla and for Chad.

2. Using the information provided in this chapter or another source related to word identification instruction, design a lesson that would be appropriate for Kayla and for Chad.

3. Think about the elements related to reading performance, beyond word identification (fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, engagement). Which might also be problem areas for Chad and Kayla? Which might be strengths?

Journals Online

Visit the student study site at www.sagepub.com/combsstudy to access recent, relevant, full-text journal articles from SAGE's leading research journals.

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