K-3 Essential 9, Bullet 3 & 4 Assessment Sample Video

MAISA Literacy Essentials

https://youtu.be/KZxajzQZY6A

Narrator: Ongoing observation and assessment of language and literacy development should inform literacy instruction. In this classroom, the teacher employs formative and diagnostic assessments to inform specific instructional targets.

Teacher Josh: I start getting to know my kids as readers even before the school year starts. I kind of schedule before school meetings, about half an hour to 45 minutes so the kids can come in and we do a couple get to know you type things. But my real goal as a teacher is to get to know them as a reader. When I meet with kids at the beginning of the year, I always ask them, tell me the last couple of books you've read or what are the favorite books you've read? So I can kind of get a feel for how much they read, whether they're motivated to read and they know automatically these are the books that I like and have read recently, or whether or not they're struggling to kind of come up with a title of, oh, my favorite book is, and that kind of gives me an idea that maybe they aren't as motivated to read on their own'that's something else that I can work on. Just figuring out how to put books in their hands that make them excited to be a reader. So we do that running record.

Running record is where the student reads a text and they read out loud, and they also read silently to themself. So I can kind of get a real overview of who they are as a reader, even before the school year starts. When they read out loud, I tend to time them. So, I time them as they go so I can figure out how many words correct per minute and get a fluency score for them. They also read silently to themself when they're done reading out loud and silently. Then I ask them to retell me what they've read in the story so I can see their ability to retell a text. And then there's some comprehension questions that test both literal information from the story as well as their ability to infer from the story.

I use that for students. It's really trying to put together an accurate picture of who a reader is and where they're struggling. So, then I can identify what teaching points and what things I can teach them specifically in order to move them forward on that reading continuum. So, once I do this running record, I can go back through to see do they have reading strategies that they can attack, words that they don't know, are they struggling to decode multi-syllable words? Are they able to retell a story? So I use the running record to kind of clue me into a student specific strengths and instructional strategies that I might need to use for them as a reader. And then I use that in conjunction with our school district screeners to see if that information kind of matches up. When I get those two pieces of information together, then I try and formulate a plan as to what specific needs that student will need instructionally, and then I can tailor my teaching points and small group instruction to that student's specific need.

I also use pretty much every opportunity that I'm sitting down and reading with a student as an opportunity to learn more about them, to see where they are excelling, to see where my next teaching points could be. So, I do a lot of work on sticky notes, writing down notes, and then accumulating those sticky notes. And when I'm reading with the student, if I notice that they're skipping over words, then I'll write that down and that kind of gives me a teaching point for the next small group time that I'm meeting with them. So, I do lots of note taking and keeping of informal records, just basically constantly trying to understand what they're doing as a reader that is different than last week and where they need to go next. We also use writing work samples, and we go back to reread what the student has written, or when we meet with them and confer with them one-on-one, looking at their writing specifically and

seeing, okay, this student has done these things well and they are about ready to do this next skill, and that's where I want to teach them.

I want to teach them that point where they're about ready to, which is tough at times as a teacher because that's different for every single kid, but it's also great because you're meeting the student where they are as a writer and then offering them the next piece of teaching to move them forward. Let me give you a couple examples of some of the students in my class who I have done this with. I had one student who came in and they were reading about a year, a year and a half below grade level. I'm a third grade teacher. So they came in reading late first grade material. When I did the running record with them, they were able to make meaning. They were able to repeat and go back in order to try and carry that meaning through. As I went through the running record, I realized the student was reading a little slowly, and that was interfering with a little bit of their ability to make meaning, and when I asked them the comprehension questions, they seemed to be able to retell exactly what happened in the story and even kind of pinpoint some smaller fine details of what happened.

So I knew it wasn't at their instructional level. I knew it wasn't a comprehension issue and more an issue of word attack and kind of the more of the basic building blocks phonics as opposed to comprehension and vocabulary. So when we did the beginning of the year screeners for our district, I noticed that the student, when I went back and looked at them, they were missing a lot of multi-syllabic words on third grade level text. So that helped me kind of tailor in my teaching to make sure that I was working with his student to break down words into pieces that they know. So I knew I needed to teach them specific reading strategies to tackle those bigger words. They had all of the smaller words. They just needed the more difficult multi-syllabic words. So that kind of helped tailor instruction. And then we also gave a spelling inventory.

When we noticed with the spelling inventory is that the student was really struggling kind of in a long vowel patterns. They were able to get the beginnings and the ends digraphs blends. But when it started varying the vowel patterns, whether it was silent e endings or vowel teams, their ability to read those words and spell the words started to break down. All three of these assessments from the beginning of the year really kind of pointed to the student needing to work on the phonics and breaking down multi-syllable words and kind of guided our instruction with her. For the first part of the year, I worked with her and really focused in those teaching points on her specific areas where she needed to improve. Then I kept checking in, monitoring her progress every six to eight weeks throughout the year, whether or not that was with another running record or some sort of progress monitoring probe to see if what we were doing and what I was teaching her was on the right track, and she was making improvement and making progress towards reading at grade level.

If she was not making progress, then I knew that I wasn't teaching her the right things, and I needed to go back and change, maybe kind of take a deeper dive and look for something else that I wasn't giving her that she needed. We got to the very end of the year, she had grown from being a late first grade reader to now being a mid third grade level reader, so almost two full years worth of progress on those running records. Her words per minute, fluency, expression, everything fluency wise has increased dramatically. She's even starting to mimic making voices, which is one of the things I end up doing in my own read alouds. So we can tell she's getting there with that words per minute and that fluency and expression. The one big one we saw at the end of the year, we were hoping to see a little bit more progress with her was on the spelling screener.

She still was kind of struggling with vowel patterns, but just kind of gives me information to hand to next year's teacher, so there'll be a little bit more knowledgeable as to where to start. Now that she's made so much progress as a reader, we're hoping to see her transition that and carry that over to her writing and her spelling. Another student I had at the beginning of the year was someone who received reading support last year, and when he came in for his running record, I was kind of surprised because he seemed to, for me, be a lot more accomplished as a reader than I anticipated, which was great. It was a really good surprise as we kind of put the running record with the beginning of the year screener and the spelling assessment, we found his words per minute. He was reading through without much problem at all.

His big challenge seemed to be comprehension, especially on the running record. He wasn't able to tell the story sequentially. When we asked him to retell, he kind of hopped around a little bit in reading. We really wanted to focus with him on the comprehension aspect, his ability to retell a story that he's read independently. He also struggled on the running record with inferential thinking, so when the story doesn't give a specific answer, he has to kind of put the pieces together himself. That was a struggle for him, so that guided our teaching points for him to more of a comprehension focus. This student is now reading just at the end of third grade and has made a lot of progress when it comes to his ability to retell a story, his ability to draw inferences from text. He was always able to do that when you were talking with him in a conversation, but his ability to do it independently as a reader has really grown throughout the year.

We feel like he's done very, very well working as a classroom teacher, I feel like it's really important to constantly collect data in order to meet every single student where they are, each student's an individual, and collecting all of this data really gives us the opportunity to meet that student where they need to be structurally and to push them forward individually. So a lot of times when people hear the word data, they think of just test scores and scores on screeners, but for me, data is about gathering information about a student, whether that is what they did over the weekend, or what book they're reading or what they're struggling with. All of those pieces of information I consider data that will then help me inform what I do as a teacher and how I teach that specific student listening, even in informal conversations about what they're doing on the weekend and where they're going and what video games they're playing, gives me ideas and topics that they can write about and things that they're interested in, so I can try and get the right books in their hands if they're stuck. As a writer, I can say, Hey, didn't you tell me that you went here over the weekend? That'd be a great story to write about. Or, oh, we're writing informational text. I know you love Minecraft. Why don't you write an informational text about Minecraft and kind of using their own areas of interest to then help with the instructional side. There are these moments that I have on my couch every night where I'm like, oh my gosh, I cannot believe where this student is or how much progress they've made.

Narrator: Learn more at literacyessentials.org.