

KEY POINTS  
COMPREHENSION  
ASSESSMENT

Reading comprehension assessment  
is thinking assessment

There are a variety of ways to  
assess thinking informally -  
they include written, oral,  
artistic and dramatic means

Be clear on the difference  
between assessing understanding  
of a given piece of text and . .

•  
assessing the thinking  
strategies that make  
comprehension possible

Gradually release responsibility  
to the student to show his/her  
thinking - ask him/her to  
defend thinking in relation to  
the text at hand and future  
application of the strategy

Collect evidence of thinking in  
very public ways

Correlate measures of thinking  
during reading to more standard  
assessment measures

The ultimate measure of success  
in comprehending is when  
a student can describe how  
and why use of a comprehension  
strategy helps him/her  
understand more completely

We can measure reading  
comprehension more formally  
using a form of the Major Point  
Interview for Readers (MPIR)

## **The Major Point Interview for Readers**

### **The options. . . .**

- ✓ One on one as an interview, given over time in its entirety (a major point assessment)
- ✓ One on one interview as a pre/post strategy study assessment (only the think aloud and a single strategy assessment are given )
- ✓ One on one interview as a listening comprehension assessment major point or pre/post strategy study
- ✓ Small or large group written response major point – leveled text or self selected text
- ✓ Small or large group written response pre/post strategy study – leveled text or self selected text
- ✓ Small or large group written response to high level text read orally

**MAJOR POINT INTERVIEW  
ORAL INTERVIEW FORM**

This form is designed to be given one-on-one to a student using text from a graded passage in an IRI or text the child is reading at the time of the assessment -- A post assessment should be given using this form and different text that is at the same level as the pre assessment. Use the directions below if you are administering the assessment as a listening OR reading comprehension instrument.

(Revised 5/02)

### TEXT BASED ASSESSMENT AND THINK ALOUD

**I want you to read several pages of this book** [Alternative for children who are not voice/print matching: I want you to tell me as much as you can about the first few pages of this book as I read it aloud to you. Be sure to tell me if you recognize any of the words or I want you to listen as I read and tell me as much as you can about what I read.]

**I am going to stop you as you (or I read I read) so you can tell me what you're thinking as you read this book.** Identify logical stopping places roughly every third or fourth page in picture books and every two to three paragraphs in longer text.

**Then, I want you to tell me exactly what you were thinking about. Tell me what you were thinking about AS YOU (or I) READ the story (or text). The important thing is that you pay attention and remember, so that you can tell me what you were thinking about while you (OR I) read the piece. You can tell me anything the book makes you think about, any problems you had while reading it, and what you think it is about.**

Read and stop or stop the child as they are reading and repeat the procedure above when enough text has been read that the child might be able to think aloud.

### STRATEGY USE INTERVIEW

Now I want to ask you some questions about what you think about while you read.

1. USES SCHEMA (Using background knowledge purposefully to understand what is read more thoroughly)

A. When you read (or listened to) that story (text) did it remind you of anything you know about or believe? What? Why did it remind you of...? [If response is no... Did it remind you of any experiences or things that have happened?]

B. Are there things you know about your life, yourself as a reader, this author or this type of text that help you to understand this book? How does that help?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. We have just discussed (talked about) what this book reminds you of. [Restate child's response.] What do you understand now that you didn't understand before? **Or:** How does it help a reader understand a story (or text) to think about their schema or background knowledge as they read? **Or:** How did thinking about your own schema or background knowledge help you understand this story (or text)?

2. INFERS (Uses background knowledge and information from the text to draw conclusions, interpret, form opinions and predict)

A1. (For narrative text) Can you predict what is about to happen? Why did you make that prediction? Can you point to (or identify) something in the book that helped you to make that prediction? [Or] What do you already know that helped you to make that prediction?

A2. (For expository text) In addition to what you have read so far, what do you think the author wants you to know or learn after you have read this far?

**Select an event or fact from the text read that would call for a conclusion, opinion or interpretation. Refer to the event or fact when asking questions under B below.**

B. What did the author mean by \_\_\_\_\_? What in the story (text) help you to know that? What do you already know that helped you to decide that?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. We have just discussed (talked about) inferring. [Restate one of child's conclusions, opinions, interpretations or predictions and identify it as an inference] What do you understand about this story (text) now that you didn't understand before? Why do readers understand better when they infer? Why should readers infer? How does inferring help a reader understand a story (text) better?

3. **ASKS QUESTIONS** (purposefully generates questions before, during, and after reading in order to comprehend what is read more completely)

A. What did you wonder about [OR ...what questions did you have] while you were reading this story (text)?

B. What questions do you have about what you read now? [OR ...wonder about now?]

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. We have just discussed (talked about) the questions you asked while you were reading. [Restate child's response.] Do questions help you understand more of what you're reading? How does that work for you when you're reading and a question comes into your mind? Do questions help you understand some kinds of text better than other kinds? Tell me more about that.

4. **DETERMINES WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN TEXT** (makes decisions about important text content and elements at the word, sentence, and whole text level)

A. Are there some parts (elements, ideas, themes, lessons, facts) in this story (text) that are more important than the others? Which ones? Why do you think they were the most important?

B. What do you think the author [or person who wrote this chapter] thought was most important so far in this story (text)? What signals or clues did the author give that made you believe \_\_\_\_\_(restate child's response) was important?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. We have just discussed (talked about) ideas, themes, words, pictures and other parts of the text (Restate child's response) that you feel are important. How does thinking about the more important parts help you to understand the text better? Do you think about (or do) anything while you're reading that helps you remember the important parts? Do you ever have trouble remembering what is important after you read? How do you solve that problem?

**REPEAT THINK ALOUD PROCESS (from the directions on page 1) WITH A CONTINUATION OF THE TEXT THE CHILD IS READING -- THEN CONTINUE WITH THE FOLLOWING STRATEGY USE QUESTIONS**

5. **MONITORS COMPREHENSION/USES APPROPRIATE FIX UP STRATEGIES** (knows when he/she is and is not comprehending, knows what needs to be understood and options for improving comprehension when the reader encounters a problem)

A. What problems did you have while you were reading this story (text)? Were your problems mostly problems in saying words or in understanding ideas? When you're reading at other times, what kinds of problems do you usually have?

B. What did you do to solve the problem? How do you usually solve the problems?

C. When you understand a story or text really well, how do you know? What would you tell another child about what a reader should try to understand each time he/she reads?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item D.**

D. We have just discussed (talked about) problems you have during reading and the ways in which you solve them. [Restate child's response.] What is important to know when you are reading and have a problem? **OR** What are all the choices you have in trying to solve that problem? **OR** What would you tell another reader who didn't realize when what he/she was reading didn't make sense to them?

6. **CREATES MENTAL IMAGES** (creates detailed images to support thorough comprehension)

A. When you were reading this story (text) did you make pictures or images in your mind? Tell me everything you can about the image in your mind while you were reading just now. What is in your image that is **not** in the words or pictures in the book?

B. Can you think of another book where you made images to help you understand the ideas? Tell me everything you can about that picture or image.

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. We have just discussed (talked about) the images you make in your mind while you read. Do those images help you to understand the story (text) better? How do images help you understand more about what you read? What would you tell another reader if he/she were trying to learn how to make images help them understand what they read?

7. **SYNTHESIZES**

A. If you were to tell another person about the story (text) you just read and you could only use a few sentences, what would you tell them?

B. When you are reading, do you ever think of books, movies or people you know? When you think of other books, movies or people, does that help you understand the book you're reading?

C. Think about what you have just said about the story. What do you understand now that you didn't understand before?

### **MAJOR POINT INTERVIEW WRITTEN FORM**

This form is to be administered to a whole class or small group of children who write responses to the questions after they are read aloud. It is best to administer the instrument in two or three blocks of approximately 30 minutes. Text can be a graded passage from an IRI or text the student is currently reading. Post assessment should be administered in the same manner and in different text at the same level.

Revised 5/02

### **TEXT BASED ASSESSMENT AND THINK ALOUD**

**I want you to read silently for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes. (Or listen as I read): When I tell you to stop, I'm going to ask you to record on paper, as much as you can remember, what you were thinking about as you read silently (or as I read to you). The important thing is that you pay attention and remember, so that you can write everything you were thinking about while you (OR I) read the piece. You can write anything the book makes you think about, any problems you had while reading it, and what you think it is about. Give students approximately 3 minutes to read and 5 minutes to write their initial thoughts about the text.**

### **STRATEGY USE INTERVIEW**

**Now I want to ask you some questions about what you think about while you read. I want you to write the number and letter of the question (i.e.1A) on your paper and then write a response to the question next to that number.**

4. **USES SCHEMA** (Using background knowledge purposefully to understand what is read more thoroughly)

A. When you read (or listened to) that story (text) did it remind you of anything you know about or believe? What? Why did it remind you of...?

B. Are there things you know about your life, yourself as a reader, this author or this type of text that help you to understand this book? How does that help?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. You have just written about what this book reminds you of. [Restate child's response.] What do you understand now that you didn't understand before? **Or:** How does it help a reader understand a story (or text) to think about their schema or background knowledge as they read? **Or:** How did thinking about your own schema or background knowledge help you understand this story (or text)?

5. INFERS (Uses background knowledge and information from the text to draw conclusions, interpret, form opinions and predict)

A. (For narrative text) Can you predict what is about to happen? Why did you make that prediction? Can you identify something in the book that helped you to make that prediction? [Or] What do you already know that helped you to make that prediction?

B. (For expository text) In addition to what you have read so far, what do you think the author wants you to know or learn after you have read this far?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. You have just written about your inferences. What do you understand about this story (text) now that you didn't understand before? Why do readers understand better when they infer? Why should readers infer? How does inferring help a reader understand a story (text) better?

6. ASKS QUESTIONS (purposefully generates questions before, during, and after reading in order to comprehend what is read more completely)

A. What did you wonder about [OR ...what questions did you have] while you were reading this story (text)?

B. What questions do you have about what you read now? [OR ...wonder about now?]

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. You have just written about the questions you asked while you were reading. Do questions help you understand more of what you're reading? How does that work for you when you're reading and a question comes into your mind? Do questions help you understand some kinds of text better than other kinds?

4. DETERMINES WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN TEXT (makes decisions about important text content and elements at the word, sentence, and whole text level)

A. Are there some parts (elements, ideas, themes, lessons, facts) in this story (text) that are more important than the others? Which ones? Why do you think they were the most important?

B. What do you think the author [or person who wrote this chapter] thought was most important so far in this story (text)?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. You have just written about ideas, themes, words, pictures and other parts of the text. How does thinking about the more important parts help you to understand the text better? Do you think about (or do) anything while you're reading that helps you remember the important parts? Do you ever have trouble remembering what is important after you read? How do you solve that problem?

**REPEAT THINK ALOUD WITH SUBSEQUENT TEXT** (See directions on page 1 - ask the students to read for about three minutes and to write for approximately five minutes)

5. MONITORS COMPREHENSION/USES APPROPRIATE FIX UP STRATEGIES (knows when he/she is and is not comprehending, knows what needs to be understood and options for improving comprehension when the reader encounters a problem)

A. What problems did you have while you were reading this story (text)? Were your problems mostly problems in knowing the words or in understanding ideas? When you're reading at other times, what kinds of problems do you usually have?

B. What did you do to solve the problem? How do you usually solve the problems?

C. When you understand a story or text really well, how do you know? What would you tell another child about what a reader should try to understand each time he/she reads?

**Use one of the Questions listed under item D.**

E. You have just written about problems you have during reading and the ways in which you solve them. What is important to know when you are reading and have a problem? What are all the choices you have in trying to solve that problem? What would you tell another reader who didn't realize when what he/she was reading didn't make sense to them?

7. **CREATES MENTAL IMAGES** (creates detailed images to support thorough comprehension)

A. When you were reading this story (text) did you make pictures or images in your mind? Write what you can remember about the image in your mind while you were reading just now. What is in your image that is **not** in the words or pictures in the book?

B. Can you think of another book where you made images to help you understand the ideas? Tell me everything you can about that picture or image.

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. You have just written about the images you make in your mind while you read. Do those images help you to understand the story (text) better? How do images help you understand more about what you read? What would you tell another reader if he/she were trying to learn how to make images help them understand what they read?

7. **SYNTHESIZES**

A. If you were to tell another person about the story (text) you just read and you could only use a few sentences, what would you tell them?

B. When you are reading, do you ever think of books, movies or people you know? When you think of other books, movies or people, does that help you understand the book you're reading?

**Use one of the alternatives described for item C.**

C. Think about what you have just written about the story. What do you understand now that you didn't understand before?

**MAJOR POINT INTERVIEW FOR READERS  
SCORING RUBRIC**

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_

## Directions

Use this rubric to record the student's scores on each **set** of questions. Both think alouds should be considered when giving the one think aloud score. All three questions should be considered when assigning one score for each strategy.

An overall criterion to bear in mind ... When the reader can go beyond explaining his/her thinking and begins to articulate how using a strategy helps him/her to comprehend better, the response should be scored at least a 4.

(Revised 05/02)

## **THINKS ALOUD**

- 1 No response, random thoughts unconnected to the text.
- 2 Disconnected thoughts relating more to the pictures than text.
- 3 Thinking is tied to text events/text content; may be inaccurate in relation to text, more tied to personal experience; may identify problems (word or text level) during reading; may include a rough retell.
- 4 Uses two or three of the following: May generate questions, may identify conflict within the text, may infer, may discuss connections between text events and own experience, may make predictions about overall book meaning; may include a detailed retelling.
- 5 Clearly expresses own thinking, may speculate about theme, discusses how own thinking supports or inhibits comprehension.

## **USES SCHEMA**

- 1 No response/schematic connection.
- 2 Can talk about what text reminds him/her of, but cannot explain; reference to schema may not be clearly connected to text.
- 3 Relates background knowledge/experience to text.
- 4 Expands interpretation of text using schema; may discuss schema related to author, text structure; may pose questions based on apparent discrepancies between text and background knowledge.
- 5 Explains how schema enriches interpretation of text; talks

about use of schema to enhance interpretation and comprehension of other texts; connections extend beyond life experience and immediate text.

## **INFERS**

- 1 No response/inference.
- 2 Attempts a prediction or conclusion, inaccurate or unsubstantiated with text information.
- 3 Draws conclusions or makes predictions that are consistent with text or schema.
- 4 Draws conclusions and/or makes predictions and can explain the source of the conclusion or prediction in text.
- 5 Develops predictions, interpretations, and/or conclusions about the text that include connections between the text and the reader's background knowledge or ideas and beliefs and that enhance the overall meaning of the text, make it more memorable to the reader.

## **QUESTIONS**

- 1 No questions/irrelevant questions.
- 2 Poses literal question(s) that relate to the text.
- 3 Poses questions to clarify meaning.
- 4 Poses questions to enhance meaning of text (critical response; big idea), may explain how posing questions deepens comprehension.
- 5 Uses questions to challenge the validity of print, author's stance/motive or point of view and to enhance his/her understanding of the text, questions may be rhetorical and would lead to interesting discussion.

## **DETERMINES WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN TEXT**

- 1 No response, random guessing, inaccurate attempt to identify important elements.
- 2 Identifies some elements (primarily pictures) as more

important to text meaning - isn't sure why they are important to overall meaning.

- 3 Identifies words, characters, and/or events as more important to overall meaning -- makes some attempt to explain reasoning - in expository text, uses text features such as bold print and captions to identify importance, can explain why the concepts are important.
- 4 Identifies at least one key concept, idea, or theme as important in overall text meaning, clearly explains why.
- 5 Identifies multiple ideas or themes, may attribute them to different points of view, discusses author's stance or purpose and its relation to key themes and ideas in the text.

## FOLLOWING A SECOND READING AND THINK ALOUD

### MONITORS COMPREHENSION

- 1 Little or no conscious awareness of reading process.
- 2 Identifies difficulties - problems are often at word level; little or no sense of the need to solve the problem; does not articulate strengths - identifies need to concentrate; says sound it out.
- 3 Identifies problems at word, sentence, or schema level; can articulate and use a strategy to solve problems - usually at the word or sentence level.
- 4 Articulates and uses more than one strategy for solving problems, focuses on problems at the schema (more global) level.
- 5 Identifies problems at all levels; uses a variety of word level and comprehension strategies flexibly and appropriately given the context and the problem.

### USES SENSORY AND EMOTIONAL IMAGES

- 1 No response or unsure what he/she is supposed to describe.
- 2 Describes some visual or other sensory images; may be tied directly to text or a description of the picture in the text.
- 3 Describes own mental images, usually visual; images are somewhat elaborated from the literal text or existing picture and help him/her to understand more than he/she would have without creating the images. May include some emotional images that enhance the meaning.
- 4 Creates and describes multi-sensory and/or emotional images that extend and enrich the text. Describes ways in which images help him/her to understand more about the text than would have been possible without the images.
- 5 Elaborates multi-sensory and emotional images to enhance comprehension - can articulate how the process enhances comprehension.

## **SYNTHESIZES**

- 1 Random or no response; may give title.
- 2 Identifies some text events - random or non-sensical order.
- 3 Synthesizes with some awareness of event sequence - beginning, middle, end or the chronology of the text as it has been read so far. Understanding the sequence appears to help him/her comprehend more effectively—may talk about how he/she changed her mind about overall story meaning during reading.
- 4 Enhances meaning in text with synthesis; may incorporate own schema; uses story elements to enhance the synthesis, may identify key themes; describes how thinking evolved from the beginning to the end of the passage;
- 5 Succinct synthesis using internalized story/genre structure, identifies key themes; may articulate how synthesizing promotes deeper comprehension—can articulate how flexibility in thinking throughout the piece promotes comprehension.

If the examiner has requested that the reader retell, use this rubric.

## **RETELLING**

- 1 Random response; may be related to story (text); may give title.
- 2 Retelling reveals beginning awareness of event sequence.
- 3 Uses story elements/genre structure to organize a relatively accurate retelling - (beginning, middle, end).
- 4 Story elements/genre structure clear in an accurate retelling - refers to interactions between story elements (how problem affects character, how setting changes problem, etc.).
- 5 Uses all story elements/genre structure and inferences to capture key themes in piece - points out inter-relationships between elements, talks about how the overall meaning is influenced.