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Pre-Tutoring Assessment for Clare Smith

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Wise Owl Services, LLC

Date of Testing: July 27th, 2018
Date of Birth: December 28th, 2008
Age at Time of Test: 9 years, 6 months.
Grade Level at Time of Test: 3.

Introduction:

An important part of our personalized tutoring service is our assessment of each new student. This suite of tests allowed me to interact with Clare and observe, not only her performance, but also how she tackled each one. These tests assess a range of skills, from the ability to segment words, to advanced vocabulary comprehension.

Executive Summary:

After our parent conference and processing Clare's assessments, her listening comprehension was found to be good, but her reading comprehension is being challenged by her obvious decoding and fluency difficulties. Clare would appear to have what is termed a double deficit; affecting both phonological and phonemic awareness, and fluency. A student that demonstrates deficits in both these areas can find the remediation process more of a challenge, and progress may be slower as a result. More practice is required to make the same progress as a student with a deficit in just one of these areas. However, it is clear to me that she is a very bright student, who has been compensating so effectively that she has really gone unnoticed. However, the effort required to keep up with her peers has been taking quite a toll on her self-esteem, and on her enjoyment of tasks that involve reading. There is no reason she cannot learn to read and write effectively, with sufficient effort from her, and those who are supporting her as we work through Orton-Gillingham Level 1 together.

Despite these challenges Clare is a super young lady with some great strengths. She loves crafting and cooking. She is curious and highly verbal, and her desire to lead should be encouraged. I plan to leverage these strengths to develop her weaker academic skills.

Appendix 2 is a checklist of the specific teaching that should be covered.

Tests Conducted:

Phonological Awareness

The ability to distinguish individual words, syllables and phonemes[1] is an important component of fluent reading. In Clare's case, the morphological (meaning) pathway is well developed, but the phonological path is weak and is hampering Clare's ability to decode words, especially multi-syllable words, and to some extent encode them for spelling.

Decoding Surveys

These measured Clare's ability to read a selection of real and nonsense words. They provide insight into her sight word vocabulary, knowledge of graphemes, and pronunciation choices.

Graded High Frequency Words, and San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Level.

These survey the student's ability to decode a set of words that are in common use at each grade level. Clare appears to be at an instructional level between 1st and 3rd grade, but her errors were telling of the problems she is experiencing when reading connected text. She read "think" for "thank" and "survive" for "several." She did correctly sound out the word "several", but was unable to blend it, so gave up and left it as "survive." She also stumbled and hesitated over a number of the multi-syllable words in the third grade list, although eventually she was successful reading these. These struggles were seen more clearly when Clare came to reading connected text later in the assessment.

The Graded High Frequency words demonstrated that Clare is at a benchmark level for words at a 1st-4th grade level. However, she again confused words such as "must" for "much", "other" for "another" and "then" for "than." She appears to rely heavily on guessing, using the initial letters and shapes of words to help her.

MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures

Using oral reading of passages calibrated to reflect the difficulty of each grade level, it is possible to obtain an objective measure of fluency in terms of correct and incorrect words per minute. This in turn provides an estimate of which material would be too easy or too challenging for a student.

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[1] Phonemes are the approximately 44 basic sounds that make up the entirety of English words.

RAN/RAS

Rapid Automatized Naming/Rapid Alternating Stimulus tests measure how quickly our minds can recognize and name common objects, colors, numbers, and letters. A deficiency in this skill makes reading an exhausting exercise, and can seriously impair fluency.

Phonics Survey

The ability to sound out unfamiliar or new words is an essential part of being an accomplished reader. Clare has a number of gaps in her knowledge in terms of the initial blends, final consonant sounds, long vowel sounds, digraphs and a possible short vowel sound confusion. This is impacting her ability to even sound out simple consonant, consonant-vowel-consonant (CCVC) words.

Core Vocabulary Screening

This is an assessment of word meaning that involves selecting the best synonym for a given word, from three possible choices. The test is untimed, and so provides another measure of reading ability in terms of grade level.

Reading Maze

This timed test measures a student's silent reading fluency and comprehension, using passages in which every 7th word is replaced by a choice of three words in parentheses. The student should circle the word that makes the most sense in the context of the text. Passages are provided that reflect different grade levels.

The results are calculated by counting the number of correct word choices made in 3 minutes.

Unaided Writing

Students are asked to spend five minutes putting their thoughts on paper, from a choice of topics. Parents can help with discussion beforehand, but the writing needs to be all their own work.

The assessment is based on quantitative measurements, as you will see in the results, but this can provide information on multiple levels: Letter formation, spelling, the ability to plan a sentence mentally and then commit it to paper, punctuation, capitalization and grammar, to name a few.

The Digit Memory Test

An assessment given to investigate verbal memory difficulties in children's learning. The student is asked to repeat a series of numbers they are presented with both forwards and in the second part of the test they are asked to repeat the digits they are given backwards.

Interpretation of Results and Tutoring Plan

This is just intended to be an overview of the tutoring plan. More detail will be provided in the Scope and Sequence documents.

Each lesson will incorporate some of the following, at least in the beginning. As we progress I may alternate these to make the best use of the lesson time. Please remember one-to-one teaching can be exhausting:

- Phonemic awareness, blending, and segmentation. The tests indicated where Clare has some challenges: Segmentation of sentences into words and words into syllables may be an issue, but syllables into phonemes was a huge problem for Clare. I will aim to provide 10 minutes of instruction and practice in this area at the start of each lesson using the "Equipped for Reading Success" program. She can further practice these skills at home using this program and the "HearBuilder" program.

- Reading (Decoding). We will start by developing knowledge of the consonant and short vowel sounds, recognizing syllables, and the blends that occur at the beginning and ends of words. Some simple rules such as the Cat/Kite Rule will be covered at this level. We shall then move to the third column of the *Suggested Order & Checklist for Phonemes, Rules and Patterns* and then on to the *Scope and Sequence for Orton-Gillingham Level 1,* when Clare is ready to deal with syllabication and multi-syllable words.
  - As Clare's phonic knowledge is built I will present her with connected text (decodable readers suitable for her age and reading ability) to help her practice that knowledge. I will also use these materials and ideas from "Equipped for Reading Success" to retrain, or 'rewire,' her brain to stop her using compensating strategies such as guessing, and instead encourage her to decode and develop her "orthographic mapping skills," which involves her matching phonemes to the correct letter or letter combinations. One example of this is asking her to read sentences and words backwards, which means she has to decode each word as she cannot rely on the context to guess.

- ○ Clare should also practice her "ear reading" using audio books and following the text when possible. An IEP or 504 would allow her to obtain the services of *Learning Ally* so she can read books at her grade level and build her fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.
  - ○ I will supply you with a copy of all these scope and sequence documents, and they each will be available in her tutoring folder. I will also be practising reading irregular words.
  - ○ Once Clare is more confident in her decoding abilities, and her reading accuracy is better, and she is compensating less, I can introduce the *Great Leaps* program to aid her reading fluency. *Please note this is no longer a program I use or recommend.*

- **Spelling (Encoding).** Reading and spelling are not bidirectional skills. If you can spell a word, you can read it, but the ability to read a word does not imply it can be spelled correctly. Clare will follow the same progression for this as for reading. Words that don't follow the common phonetic rules, I'll be teaching as "Irregular Words." *Please note I now teach these words using a Structured Word Inquiry Approach.*

- **Writing.** Clare demonstrated she may have a possible reversal problem as she read "drag" for "brag" during the Decoding Survey. I'll work on Clare's reversals using the *Reversing Reversal* resources.
  - ○ I noticed that Clare switches between an alternate pencil grip and one where the thumb is extended across the pencil. I can give her some therapy putty to help strengthen her hand as it may be tiring when writing, but as her mother is an OT, I'm happy to defer to her to suggest exercises. The Ishy Sail pencil grip may also be helpful. It has been developed by an OT that runs the Therapy Fun Store. I have one available that she can try. Clare also needs to be encouraged to use her helper hand to stabilize the paper and think about the position and slant angle of her paper. (https://therapyfunstore.com/products/ishy-sail-pencil-grip)
  - ○ Clare might be interested in learning cursive, and if this is the case it would be useful for her to use the Handwriting Without Tears 3rd and 4th grade program at home, or a program such as CursiveLogic, if time for practice is more limited. She may particularly enjoy using "The Art of Cursive Logic" Coloring book alongside of their regular workbook. It might also be helpful to consider starting the *Keyboarding Without Tears* program.
  - ○ From the outset, Clare will be asked to spell words and write short dictated sentences during our sessions. It is during these times I will ask her to review

correct capitalization, her handwriting, spacing, reversals, punctuation, and spelling.

I will provide exercises to reinforce these concepts outside of lesson time, but I do understand that Clare's schedule is already crowded, especially while school is in session.

Little and often is most effective. A good target is 20 minutes per day, at least for the repetitive parts.

Appendix 1: Test Results

Phonemic Awareness

Test Name	Raw Score	Notes
Phoneme deletion: Initial sound	5/5	Benchmark
Phoneme deletion: Final sound	5/5	Benchmark, but slow.
Phoneme deletion: First sound of consonant blend	5/5	Benchmark, although Clare did have some issues with one of the practice items and she was slow to complete this activity.
Phoneme deletion: Embedded sound in consonant blend.	5/5	Benchmark, but slow.
Segmentation tests: Part 1, providing a count of number of words/syllables/ phonemes.	Sentences->words: 4/5 Words->syllables: 8/8 Words into phonemes: 9/10	Clare scored at benchmark level, but she would benefit from work at the sentence, syllable and phoneme level.
Segmentation tests: Part 2 identifying individual phonemes in words.	7/15	Some intensive remediation is required in this area.

Decoding Surveys:

Beginning and Advanced Survey: Clare failed to read enough words correctly on these two surveys to meet the benchmark for her grade. She read 46 words correctly out of a possible 50 words on the Beginning Survey. 48 correct words represents benchmark. She read 21 words out of a possible 30 on the Advanced Survey. 25 correct words represents benchmark.

Approximate Reading Level Assessment using the San Diego Quick Assessment.

Grade Level of Words	Score out of 10	Competency
Pre-Primer	10	Independent
Primer	10	Independent
Grade 1	9	Independent
Grade 2	10	Independent
Grade 3	9	Independant
Grade 4	7	Frustration

RAN/RAS

The raw score is the time taken to name all 50 items in the test. This is then ranked using a detailed set of tables for each age range. The number of errors made is not taken into account unless it is severe, in which case the examiner should probably be running a different test altogether. The results indicate Clare has a delay recalling letters and a mix of letters, numbers and, colors which could be impacting her reading speed and fluency.

Test	Time in seconds	Percentile Rank	Descriptive Rating
Objects	44	39	Average
Colors	47	32	Average
Numbers	33	25	Average
Letters	34	18	Below Average
Letters and Numbers	39	30	Average
Letters, Numbers, colors	43	23	Below Average

MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures

Clare was asked to read a passage at Grades 3, 2, and then 1, out-loud. The test allows calculation of words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) and words-incorrect-per-minute (WIPM) and provides a measure of reading accuracy. Clare answered some comprehension questions following the reading of these passages.The 4th grade passage was also read to Clare, she then answered some comprehension questions.

The results are tabulated below.

Level	WCPM	WIPM	Accuracy	Notes
3	54	4	93% (Instructional)	I didn't ask any comprehension questions due to the fact she was struggling so much to decode and read the passage fluently enough. Her fluency was just above the 10th percentile.
2	95	1	99%	Her fluency was between the 25th and 50th percentile. I asked her to read beyond the 1 minute point, so I could ask her some comprehension questions. I noticed that Clare makes a lot of omissions and additions to the words she reads as well as leaving words that look similar to the correct word, but disrupt the meaning of what she is reading. She appears to guess words she isn't sure about, rather than trying to decode them. Despite all this she was able to answer my questions about the text and beyond reasonably well.
1	80	1	99%	Her fluency was between the 25th-50th percentile and nearer to the 25th percentile. She made similar errors as described for her reading of the 2nd grade passage. Despite this, she again was able to answer my questions reasonably well.

Clare's reading speed is around the 25th-50th percentile range for a First/Second Grade reading level. She appears to be reading independently at that level in terms of her accuracy. She often hesitated and guessed many words while reading these passages. Her reading rate and decoding ability are impacting her ability to *read for information,* although despite this she does seem to have a pretty good grasp of what the passages are about at these levels. I assume it is very tiring for Clare to read for long. When Clare was read the 4th grade passage, she had no difficulty answering questions about the text and beyond it. She demonstrated good background knowledge. That said, she, along with **almost all** elementary school students, will gain additional meaning from listening while simultaneously reading along with the text.

Spelling Dictation.

This appears to be more of an area of strength for Clare when compared to her reading, but I did notice that once we got beyond spelling single syllable words Clare was having far more difficulty making the correct grapheme choices. This is going to have a huge impact on her

ability to write more interesting and complicated text in 4th grade. Her spelling is at a 4th Grade level (4.5.) While spelling by sounding out is the weakest driver for spelling choices, it is still important in selecting the correct vowels, and consonant blends. Clare is probably taking a more visual approach and is probably unaware of many of the basic spelling rules. I won't highlight all the errors she made, but I have noticed they are at a multi-syllable level. She also appears to be unaware of some of the multiple spelling choices for certain phonemes such as /j/ can be spelled with a <j> and <dge>. She wrote "juge" for "judge." In the checklist in Appendix 2, I have included the foundational spelling rules that we shall be covering. I also noted while Clare was undergoing this assessment that she doesn't always punctuate her sentences. She didn't angle the sloped writing board, but she did angle her paper on it. I already mentioned the pencil grips I observed her using, and that she doesn't always use her free hand to steady the paper.

Core Vocabulary Screening

This is an assessment of word meaning that involves selecting the best synonym for a given word, from three possible choices. Scores of 23 and above are considered *benchmark*, meaning a student can access material at that level with a reasonable chance of making sense of it. A score of 15-22 (*strategic*) means they may have some difficulty without receiving additional input. Scores of 14 and below require intensive help. Clare did have some difficulty reading the words to always make a correct selection.

Grade Level	Score	Rating
1	28/30 (2 incorrect)	Benchmark
2	29/30 (1 no response)	Benchmark
3	30/30	Benchmark

Reading Maze

This timed test measures a student's silent reading fluency and comprehension, using passages in which every 7th word is replaced by a choice three of words in parentheses.

For each grade, a calibration table indicates whether the student is reading at or below benchmark.

The results are tabulated below.

Grade level	Words correct in 3 minutes	Performance
2	9	Strategic
3	14	Benchmark

The results indicated that despite even being in a timed situation, such as the Reading Maze, Clare is able to extract enough information from the text to select the correct word, from a group of three, for a sentence to make sense. However sustained reading for periods of time longer than a few minutes may be more of a challenge for Clare to comprehend. Her parents spoke of this being an issue. For these situations, she should be using assistive technology such as the services that Learning Ally provide, or some other form of text to speech.

Unaided Writing

The raw results from this exercise are tabulated below, after which I have listed some additional observations:

Measurement	Score	Notes
Total words written (TWW)	26	
Total letters written (TLW)	89	
Words spelled correctly (WSC)	25	
Correct writing sequences	23/28	A complex measurement involving accuracy of spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation.
Spelling accuracy	96%	
Average word length	3.42	News reports average around 5 characters/word.
Overall accuracy	82%	Considering spelling, punctuation and usage.

This piece of writing did not reflect what one would expect from a child with the rich oral vocabulary that Clare has. Her writing fluency is definitely below grade level. She may also have been selecting "safe" words to avoid spelling errors.

The Digit Memory Test

Clare achieved a standard score of 96 and a percentile equivalent of 39, which could indicate some working memory difficulties. This should be further explored and assessed.

Appendix 2 Specific Tutoring Checklist

Grapheme to Phoneme Checklist

This is a list of the graphemes that Clare had difficulty with during the assessment and she will benefit from knowing in order to successfully sound out unfamiliar words containing these.

Grapheme	Sound Choices
e	Clare gave a short /a/ sound for this letter in a cvcc word.
tch	Clare gave /nch/ for this consonant trigraph.
g	Clare gave a /k/ sound for this consonant in the final position in the word.
ai	Clare gave the long /e/ sounds for this vowel team.

Spelling Rules

I shall endeavor to teach these essential, reliable and simple rules. Clare will learn far more than these as we progress through Orton-Gillingham Level 1, but this will be our starting point. I feel that Clare will be able to work fairly quickly through the Orton-Gillingham Level 1 Foundation Stage and I will endeavor to cover more than one concept per session at this stage.

c/k/ck rules	Whether to use 'c', 'k', or 'ck' is well defined, with few exceptions. (Cat/Kite Rule & the 'soldier rule.')
FLOSS Rule	The letters 'f', 'l', 's', and 'z' are almost always doubled at the end of closed single syllable words.
ch/tch	Also known as the "Soldier Rule."
Recognizing, spelling, and handling some simple suffixes.	

Punctuation and Capitalization

I will cover basic punctuation, and capitalization. Grammar is covered by the Basic Writing Skills course which follows O-G Level 1.