

Pre-Tutoring Assessment for Matthew Richard Davis

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Date of Testing: September 10th, 2018

Date of Birth: August 3rd, 2009

Age at Time of Test: 9 years, 1 month.

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 Matthew and observe, not only his performance, but also how he tackled each one. These tests assess a range of skills, from the ability to segment words, to more advanced comprehension questioning of a text read to Matthew.

Executive Summary:

After processing Matthew's assessments and working with him during the testing situation, Matthew's listening comprehension appears to be weak, and it is being further challenged by his decoding and fluency difficulties. It is very important that he be formally evaluated to assess his processing speed, ability to recall information, working memory, and expressive language skills. Other areas of concern are possible tracking issues, focus and attention problems as well as difficulties with phoneme articulation and discrimination. Writing and handwriting also appear to be a challenge for him. Difficulties with perception were noted in his Individualized Education Program (IEP.) Areas of strength appear to be mathematical and

kinesthetic skills, and if this is the case it could help to incorporate movement when working on concepts, problems, and directions.

Since Matthew will be formally evaluated by an educational psychologist, and that will include a RAN/RAS¹ assessment, I have not performed that test here. Performing the same test twice can affect the 2nd test result. Matthew appears to have a recall issue, but without further assessment it is difficult to be sure. My evaluation scores indicated weaknesses in phonological and phonemic awareness. A student that demonstrates deficits in both phonological and phonemic awareness, and rapid-automatic-naming, can find the remediation process 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.

I was able to observe Matthew writing during our testing session, and it appears that his teachers have been working very hard to help him with his handwriting, but this is still a very challenging area for him. Perception and motor coordination difficulties were noted as causes of his handwriting difficulties in his IEP. Matthew's ability to learn to read, write, and spell is being challenged in a variety of ways. A full educational evaluation in addition to evaluations of his speech and language skills, motor coordination, and visual perception, would be helpful in pinpointing weaknesses. Matthew mentioned his dislike of reading, and is upset that his friends are so much better. However, there is no reason he cannot learn to read, write, spell, and develop his expressive language abilities, once these weaknesses are addressed. It will of course require sufficient effort from him, and those who are supporting him.

Despite these challenges, Matthew is a super young man who is very cooperative, keen to do well, and seems to be prepared to work hard. I plan to leverage these attitudes to develop his weak 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 phonemes² is an important component of fluent reading. In Matthew's case, the morphological (meaning) pathway needs to be developed, as well as the phonological path which is also very weak, and is hampering Matthew's ability to decode words when reading and encode them for spelling. For this

¹ Rapid Automatic Name, Rapid Alternating Stimulus. The test evaluates how quickly a student can name common objects, colors, letters, and numbers.

² Phonemes are the approximately 44 basic sounds that make up the entirety of English words.

reason Matthew is finding the process of orthographic mapping very challenging. Orthographic mapping is how we make connections between oral sounds in spoken words and the letters in written words, it is an essential part of successful encoding and decoding.

Decoding Survey & Core Phonics Survey

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

The ability to sound out unfamiliar or new words is an essential part of being an accomplished reader. Matthew has a number of gaps in his knowledge including one of the letter names (lowercase only), consonant sounds, and short vowel sound confusion. This is impacting his ability to even sound out simple vowel-consonant (VC) and consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words.

Graded High Frequency Words & The San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Level

These survey the student's ability to decode or read a set of words that are in common use at each grade level. These assessments include a combination of decodable and non-decodable high-frequency words. These assessments demonstrated that Matthew is struggling to begin the reading process as he had weakness even at the Primer level.

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. Matthew attempted to read the 1st grade passage, and following this attempt I read it to him. After my reading of the passage I asked him some comprehension questions about the text.

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. Matthew was unable to read the 1st grade screening assessment by himself, so it wasn't possible to score this.

Core Reading Maze Comprehension

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. Matthew was unable to read the 2nd grade passage, so it wasn't possible to score this.

New Stanford Achievement Test-Sentence Dictation

This is an untimed test and the student is given a series of dictated sentences and asked to write them. Sentences are dictated until three successive sentences have all the underlined words in the test misspelled. *Please note that I no longer use or recommend this test having replaced it with a choice of spelling inventories.*

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.

Interpretation of Results and Tutoring Plan

This is just intended to be an overview of the tutoring plan. Each lesson will incorporate some of the following:

- Phonological and Phonemic awareness, blending, and segmentation. The tests indicated where Matthew has challenges: Rhyme (automaticity is an issue here), segmentation of sentences into words, phoneme blending, segmentation of words into phonemes, and phoneme deletion. I will aim to provide 10 minutes of instruction and practice in this area at the start of each lesson using a variety of materials, leading into my using the "Equipped for Reading Success" program. He can further practice these skills at home using this program and the "HearBuilder" program.

- Expressive Language. Initially, we shall be using Erica Warren’s Visualization program and games to help develop Matthew’s expressive language skills, alongside of Orton-Gillingham Level 1.
- 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 Matthew is ready to deal with syllabication and multi-syllable words.
 - As Matthew’s phonic knowledge is built I will present him with connected text (decodable readers suitable for his age and reading ability) to help him practice that knowledge. I will also use the materials and ideas from “Equipped for Reading Success” to retrain, or ‘rewire,’ his brain away from using compensating strategies such as guessing. Instead I’ll encourage him to decode and develop his “orthographic mapping skills,” which involves him matching phonemes to the correct letter or letter combinations.
 - Matthew should also practice his “ear reading,” using the services of *Learning Ally*, so he can read books at his grade level and build his fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. Note that, because of his listening comprehension difficulties it is important that an adult is checking in with him and asking him questions about what he has been reading. These questions should go beyond the literal (“How many?” “What color?”) and ask him to retell the story, reorganize information he has “ear” read to answer a question, and get him to infer, evaluate, and define, the meaning of vocabulary words in a text.
 - I will supply you with a copy of all these scope and sequence documents, and they each will be available in his tutoring folder. Matthew will also be practicing reading and spelling irregular words with me.
 - Once Matthew is more confident in his decoding abilities, and we have developed his letter blending abilities and improved his word-reading, I may introduce the *Great Leaps* program to aid his 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 generally read it, but the ability to read a word does not imply it can be spelled correctly. Matthew will follow the same progression for this as for reading. Words that don’t follow the common phonetic rules, I’ll be teaching as “Red Words.”

- Writing. I noticed that Matthew switches between a tripod pencil grip and one where the thumb is extended across the pencil. I can give him some therapy putty and exercises to help strengthen his hand which appears to be tiring when writing. The Ischy 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 he can try. Matthew also needs to be encouraged to use his helper hand to stabilize the paper and think about the position and slant angle of his paper. (<https://therapyfunstore.com/products/ishy-sail-pencil-grip>)
 - I recommend the inexpensive, *Handwriting Without Tears*(HWT), **Wet Dry Try** app to continue to practice correctly forming the lower and upper case letters. I will use many of the hands-on HWT materials to practice letter formation, but most of the practice will need to take place at home.
 - After this we will move to working through the HWT Printing Power for practice, and at the same time Matthew can start the *Keyboarding Without Tears* program for first or second grade.
 - From the outset, Matthew will be asked to spell words and write short and simple dictated sentences during our sessions. It is during these times I will ask him to review correct capitalization, his handwriting, punctuation, and spelling.

I will provide exercises to reinforce these concepts outside of lesson time. The work I set will require between 40-50 minutes of work to be completed on a daily basis. This includes expressive language work, review, drills, and handwriting work. Keyboarding, reading with Learning Ally, and HearBuilder will be in addition to this.

Appendix 1: Test Results

Phonemic Awareness

Test Name	Raw Score	Notes
Rhyming	16/16	Matthew was able to successfully complete these activities, but he was not always automatic in his responses. He wasn't always able to suggest a real word for the Rhyme Supply, and in those cases he gave a nonsense word.
Onset and rime	8/8	He was able to blend the onsets and rimes he was given for the test, but when given /f/ /ed/ in the practice he replied with Fred.
Phoneme blending	8/8	Blending 3 sounds such as /t/, /a/, /p/. During the practice he said Fred for /f/, /e/, /d/ and moss for /l/, /o/ /s./
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	Matthew scored at an intensive level for 1st grade when segmenting sentences into words. He scored at benchmark at 1st grade on the other two areas.

Core Phoneme Segmentation Test	Words into phonemes: 6/15	Matthew scored at an intensive level for 1st grade. He needs intensive help in this area. He had difficulty separating the initial and end blends, and also omitted the 'r' from the triple spr blend. He also had difficulty separating the vowels and the consonant following it or end blend.
Core Phoneme Deletion Test	Part A: Initial Sound (Late Kindergarten, Grade 1) 4/5	Say "cat" and now say it without the /k/.....(at) Matthew was also far from automatic. He requires intensive help in this area.

Decoding Surveys:

Beginning Survey: Matthew failed to read enough words correctly on this survey to meet the benchmark for his grade. He read 29 words correctly out of a possible 50 words. 48 correct words represents benchmark.

Phonics Survey

The ability to sound out unfamiliar or new words is an essential part of being an accomplished reader. Matthew has a number of gaps in his knowledge in this area. I did not complete the whole survey for this reason.

Letter Names

Matthew does know the names of all of the uppercase letters, but when presented with the lowercase letters he did not know the name of the letter 'x' and called it 'k'.

Consonant Sounds

Matthew made a couple of mistakes in this area, which I have noted in Appendix 2, under the Grapheme to Phoneme Checklist.

Vowel Sounds

Matthew knew the long and short sounds for the vowels. However, the subsequent test of short vowels in closed consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) syllables demonstrated he wasn't sure where he should be using the short and long vowel sounds. His attempts involved him often decoding these words letter by letter. This was a very slow process for him and I also noticed that he was consistently giving long vowel sounds where he should have been using short vowel sounds, as well as giving the wrong vowel. He said "met" for the nonsense word "pem."

The Beginning Decoding Survey also showed many of the same issues. Explicit teaching is necessary to correct this. Matthew scored 81 out of a possible 83 on the "Alphabet Skills and Letter Sounds" part of the Phonics Survey. He was at a strategic level, but far from automatic. On the section covering short vowels in CVC words, he only scored 6 out of a possible 15. This demonstrated that he needs intensive help in this area.

Approximate Reading Level Assessment using the San Diego Quick Assessment.

Grade Level of Words	Score out of 10	Competency
Preprimer	10	Independent
Primer	6	Frustration

Core Graded High-Frequency Word Survey

Grade Level	Score	Rating
Kindergarten	10/10	Benchmark
1st Grade	21/24	Benchmark
2nd Grade	16/24	Intensive

Matthew's results on this survey indicate he would benefit from learning irregular words or "Red Words," alongside of some high frequency regular words that he isn't yet familiar with, but are found in 1st-2nd grade reading text.

MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures

The test allows calculation of words-correct-per-minute (WCPM) and words-incorrect-per-minute (WIPM) and provides a measure of reading accuracy. Matthew attempted to read the 1st grade passage, and following this attempt I read it to him. After reading him the passage, I asked him some comprehension questions about the text.

Level	WCPM	WIPM	Accuracy	Notes
1	34	21	62% (Frustration)	Matthew was between the 25th and 50th percentile in terms of fluency at a 1st grade level, but Matthew is starting 3rd grade and his word accuracy level is so low (he is making an error between every 2-3 words) it means comprehension is very unlikely if he is decoding the text himself. I then read the text to Matthew. Despite being read the text, Matthew had difficulty answering any of the questions I asked him which involved reorganizing the information, inferring from, or evaluating the text. He really needed to be guided to do this. He seemed to be unable to create a mental picture of what he had heard and provide a description. Expressive language would appear to be an issue.

Spelling Dictation.

Matthew scored 12 words correctly and this puts him at an age of 6 years and 10 months for spelling. I also noted during this assessment that he often capitalized his sentences, but never punctuated them with a period. He did attempt to sound out his words as he spelled them. He resisted adjusting the angle of the sloped writing board. I already mentioned how he holds his pencil, and that he doesn't always use his free hand to steady the paper. His letters were recognizable, but not always placed on the line, nor uniform in size. He would benefit from continued work on letter formation.

Unaided Writing

Students with dysgraphia face several hurdles with writing: Not just letter formation, but also that the cognitive effort required leaves little working memory available for sentence composition, spelling, and grammar. Matthew appears to have all of these challenges.

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

Measurement	Score	Notes
Total words written (TWW)	44	
Total letters written (TLW)	124	25 letters per minute
Words spelled correctly (WSC)	32	
Correct writing sequences	5/54	A complex measurement involving accuracy of spelling, grammar, capitalization and punctuation.
Spelling accuracy	73%	
Average word length	3	News reports average around 5 characters/word.
Overall accuracy	9%	Considering spelling, punctuation and usage.

In addition to the above I also noted that Matthew used only one period in his work and that was at the end.

Appendix 2 Specific Tutoring Checklist

Grapheme to Phoneme Checklist

This is a list of the graphemes that Matthew will benefit from knowing, in order to successfully sound out an unfamiliar CVC word. However, we shall be covering *all* the consonant and short vowel sounds, and blending, reading and spelling simple CVC words using them. Matthew reads letter by letter when decoding words, or simply guesses by looking at the letters at the beginning and end of word. He will also require help with blending letters to improve his word reading fluency.

Grapheme	Sound Choices
l	Matthew gave the short and long vowel sound /i/ for this letter on the Phonics Survey.
d	Matthew replaced this letter with a 't' for example he gave "lit" for "lid."
y	Matthew replaced the letter 'y' with a 'w' for example he gave "wed" for "yed."
g	Matthew gave the /j/ sound for this letter, but later corrected himself.
e	Matthew often gave the long vowel sounds for this letter where he needed to use the short vowel sound.
a/u, a/i, o/i, u/i e/o, u/e, u/a	Matthew confused all of these vowel sounds during the Beginning Decoding Survey.
ch	Matthew often gave the /k/ sound for this digraph as a first choice or the blend sound /kl/ when it was at the beginning of a word.
w	Matthew gave /kw/ for this letter in the nonsense word 'weck.'

I have already noted in the Phonics Survey which consonant name Matthew didn't know.

Spelling Rules

I shall endeavor to teach these essential, reliable and simple rules. Matthew will learn far more than these as we progress through Orton-Gillingham Level 1, but this will be our starting point.

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.
dge/tch rule	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.

Additional notes

1. Matthew would benefit from having an Occupational Therapy (OT) evaluation and continuing to work with an occupational therapist to help develop his fine motor skills and handwriting skills as well as developing his tracking skills. Motor coordination and visual perception skills were noted as being a problem in his IEP.
2. Tracking issues should be discussed with Matthew's eye doctor. Matthew skips over words or parts of words. I also noted some letter sequencing issues.
3. It would also be very helpful for Matthew to undergo a full evaluation with his speech and language teacher, to establish remaining phoneme articulation and discrimination issues as well as expressive language issues.
4. Matthew requires a full academic educational evaluation. This will help us all pinpoint his weaknesses and strengths.