Assessment of Learning Differences

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What Testing Can/Cannot Do

• Assessment is mandated by law for students in special education to determine eligibility and to monitor progress although the rules for what constitutes assessment have changed

•Most tests are designed to you how your child is doing relative to other students nationally; it does not tell how your child is doing relative to peers in his/her class

•Testing can tell you if your child is making expected progress

What Testing Can/Cannot Do

- We do not have tests that directly measure why a child is having learning difficulty (e.g. ADHD; Dyslexia)

- If well analyzed, testing can tell you where your child needs help or remediation and where s/he is relatively strong

- Standardized tests can’t tell you if a child is making progress during the course of a school year; at best, they are designed to be administered once a year.

Types of Standardized Tests

Intelligence/Cognitive

WISC-IV; Woodcock Johnson-Cognitive; Differential Abilities Scales

Information Processing/Neuropsychological

WRAML; Rey Osterrieth; NEPSY; C-TOPP; RAS/RAS

Academic

Standardized

WJ-Academic; WIAT-2; Gray Oral; Test of Written Language; Key Math

Curriculum Based

DIBELS, AIMSweb

Language

CELF; Peabody Picture Vocabulary

Social-Behavioral

Checklists/Surveys

BASC-2; BRIEF; Children's Depression Inventory

Projective

TAT, TED, Rorschach

What is a neuropsychological assessment ?

A frame of reference for interpreting test performance which links test performance to specific brain functions:

- Memory and new learning
- Language
- Attention/Executive Functions
- Visuo-spatial skills
- Motor functions

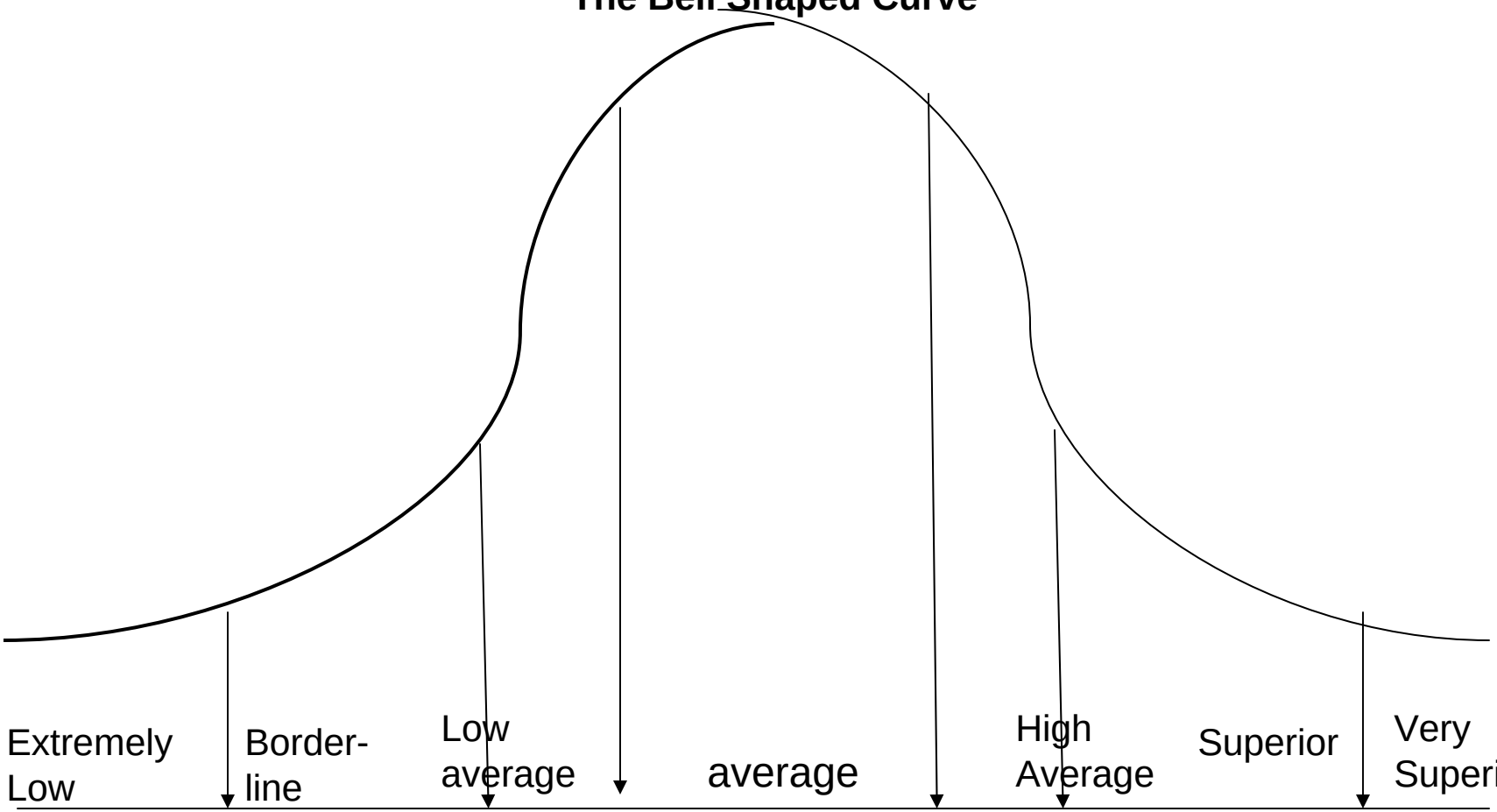
Often the tests administered are parallel to the tests administered by school psychologists and learning specialists

Can be helpful in understanding a child's information processing but the links between neuropsychological test findings and instructional strategies are not always clear

Considerations When Looking at Test Scores

- What was the child asked to do?
- What aspect of the task was challenging for the child?
- Are the test requirements parallel to classroom requirements?
- How does this test score compare with scores on other tests?
- How does this test score compare with previous scores?

The Bell Shaped Curve



Response to Intervention (RTI)
A New Assessment Model

Discrepancy models (i.e. defining learning disability as academic achievement significantly below cognitive ability) have not proven helpful in identifying students with learning disabilities and often lead to delayed intervention

The correlation between “process” assessments and intervention strategies is relatively low

Skills that may score “average” against national norms may place a child well below classroom peers

Using standardized testing administered once a year, you may go a whole year without knowing if a student in making progress

Response to Intervention (RTI)
A New Assessment Model

RTI is based on curriculum based measures: Brief, frequent samples of academic skills drawn from grade-level curriculum

All students in a grade are assessed three times a year; students who score below a particular level are immediately provided with increased intervention

Students who have been identified as need additional support are monitored more frequently and their progress can be graphed and analyzed; if they are not making gains, intervention frequency or type of intervention can be changed

RTI does not necessarily rule out other kinds of assessment

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
DIBELS

Three “benchmarks” a year; additional progress monitor available for students with more significant concerns

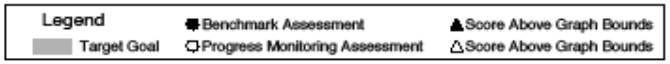
Always based on timed (one minute) “probes”

Measures:

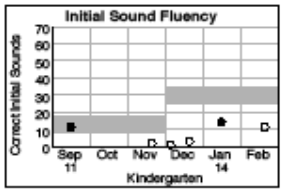
- Phonemic Awareness (Grades K-2)
  - Letter sounds
  - Segmenting Sounds
- Alphabet Principle: Phonemic Word Fluency (Grades K-2)
- Word Use Fluency (K-3)
- Oral Reading Fluency (Grades 1-6)
- Oral Retell Fluency (Grades 1-6)

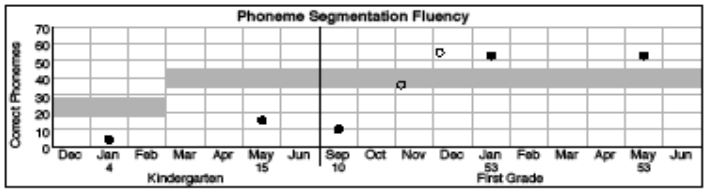
Name: Student, Alice
ID: 123456
Class: Mrs. Smith Grade 4
Grade: Fourth
Year: 2007-2008
School: Cherry Park
District: Test District

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills
Individual Student Performance Profile

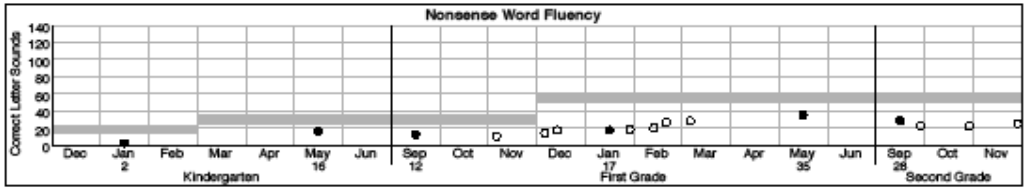


PHONEMIC AWARENESS

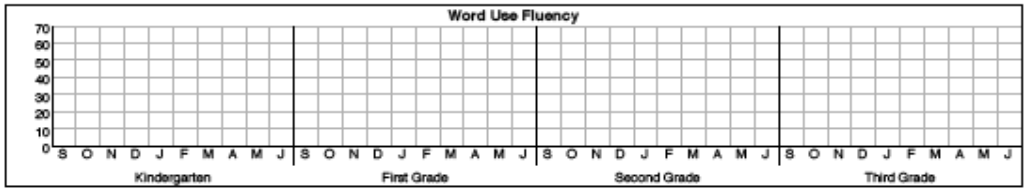




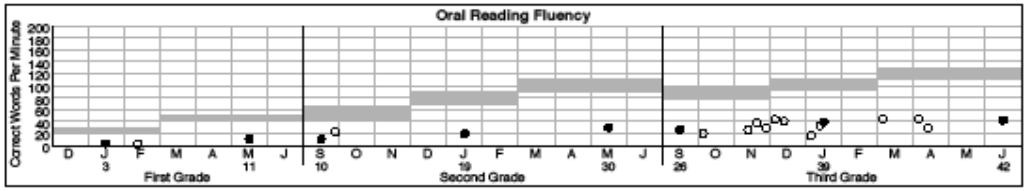
ALPHABETIC PRINCIPLE

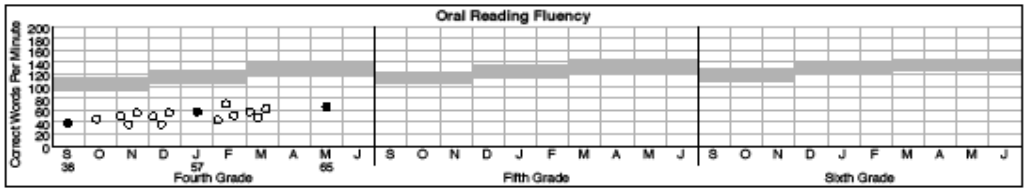


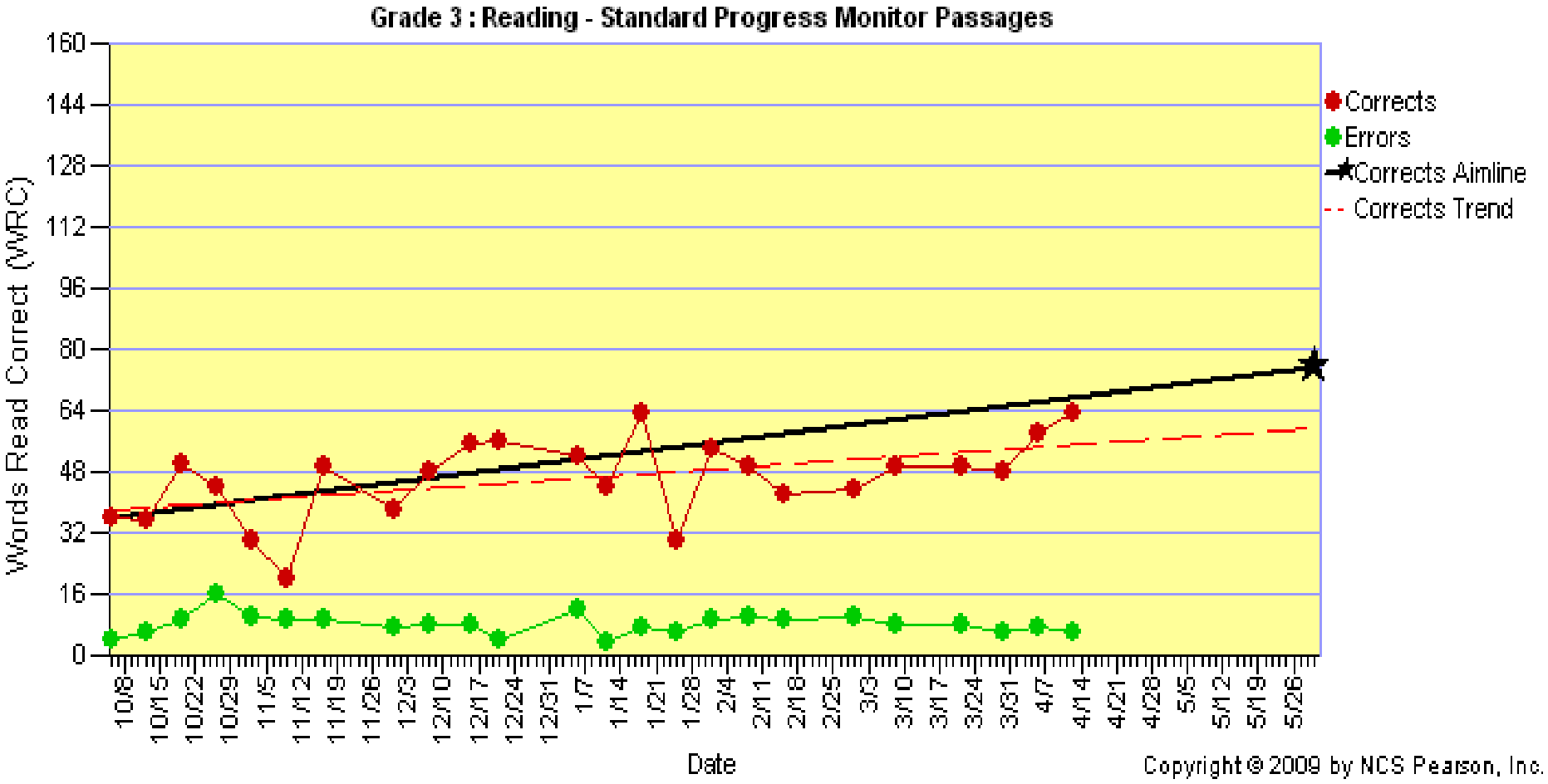
VOCABULARY AND ORAL LANGUAGE



FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION







Letter Naming Fluency

AIMSweb® Letter Naming Fluency - Progress Monitor Assessment #4

Given To: _____ Given By: _____ Date: _____

u o L P K b E j H h / 10 (10)

S c a U I K T N L Y / 10 (20)

k B H Y M g o Q p W / 10 (30)

U W u Q O s A n P i / 10 (40)

G o n Z I c L X U i / 10 (50)

m E d I j Y p G v B / 10 (60)

P c r H K x M i O W / 10 (70)

W A N x k I a u Q d / 10 (80)

z N X M L e g I C p / 10 (90)

A F k j H U z s I L / 10 (100)

___/___

Letter Sound Fluency

AIMSweb® Letter Sound Fluency - Progress Monitor Assessment #4

Given To: _____ Given By: _____ Date: _____

a y m p n e v b f c / 10 (10)

z r u g c b e l k p / 10 (20)

g k j y n d p t h f / 10 (30)

j u b g m a t e z f / 10 (40)

z b i u n e g m f r / 10 (50)

k s z y d o g p u h / 10 (60)

w i p j o g n b a k / 10 (70)

m j c r g i h v a p / 10 (80)

k u v o a c t h n j / 10 (90)

u s t g j e n v l o / 10 (100)

___/___

Nonsense Word Fluency

AIMSweb® Nonsense Word Fluency - Progress Monitor Assessment #4

Given To: _____ Given By: _____ Date: _____

noj	vez	ruz	biv	yep	/ 15 (15)
nof	lal	jon	duv	luk	/ 15 (30)
sij	yuc	mod	lef	hus	/ 15 (45)
mij	vis	kuj	jep	miz	/ 15 (60)
wip	pez	fik	vug	az	/ 14 (74)
non	kat	jik	pas	joz	/ 15 (89)
nik	ret	od	lic	dop	/ 14 (103)
kos	muv	jid	sus	tos	/ 15 (118)
zuc	laf	het	kuc	yub	/ 15 (133)
woj	fos	og	rev	wij	/ 14 (147)
wef	jof	yug	iz	fav	/ 14 (161)
muz	nav	mac	vuz	bik	/ 15 (176)
tud	veb	pep	wal	sid	/ 15 (191)
suz	mav	hij	yob	nov	/ 15 (206)
vom	yec	ic	hej	hon	/ 14 (220)

____/____

One morning June was certain she'd seen a unicorn outside her bedroom window. She had just woken up from a deep sleep and was on her way down to the kitchen when she saw a streak of silver and white whiz through her backyard.

She hadn't been dreaming. Oh no, June Joy Jones didn't just dream things up. She was a very practical little girl. She was extremely smart and clear-headed.

Throughout all her grade-school career, she'd gotten all As and never a B. She was a good student, but what she didn't have was a very keen imagination. She never made stuff up. She didn't believe in magic, make-believe, or luck. That's how she knew she wasn't imagining the horned horse. June Joy Jones wouldn't have seen a live unicorn if a live unicorn hadn't really been there. Still, June didn't tell her parents about the unicorn over breakfast.

Both her parents were scientists who wouldn't believe anything unless they saw it floating in a test tube. June knew that if she told them about the unicorn, they would simply raise their eyebrows and tell her she'd been dreaming. So she didn't say a word and vowed to look for the unicorn herself as soon as she got a chance.

That chance came thirty minutes later when June was waiting for the school bus. She knew she had exactly five minutes to spare before the bus stopped at her driveway, so she slipped off her backpack and stepped into her backyard. June found rabbit and squirrel tracks, but no unicorn tracks. June was never one to give up though, so she kept searching. She became so caught up with her search that the school bus came and left without her.

"Maybe I didn't see a unicorn," June murmured to herself.

Suddenly a branch snapped behind her. June spun around. There was a beautiful white unicorn with a silver mane and golden hooves!

"You missed your bus," the unicorn said. "I could give you a ride if you'd like."