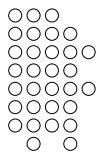


## The Role of Diagnostic Assessment in an RtI Framework: The Key to Needs Identification and Prescriptive Teaching

Michael C. McKenna  
University of Virginia  
mcm7g@virginia.edu



## Today's Goals

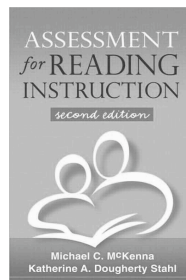


- Define diagnostic assessments and examine their purpose in RtI.
- Describe their role in the Cognitive Model of Reading Assessment.
- Explore one way of applying diagnostic assessments to guide and gauge small-group differentiated instruction.

## Diagnostic assessments ...



provide detailed information useful in planning instruction. These tests may involve multiple dimensions, possibly represented by subtests or by a variety of tasks a student is asked to perform (McKenna & Stahl, 2008).



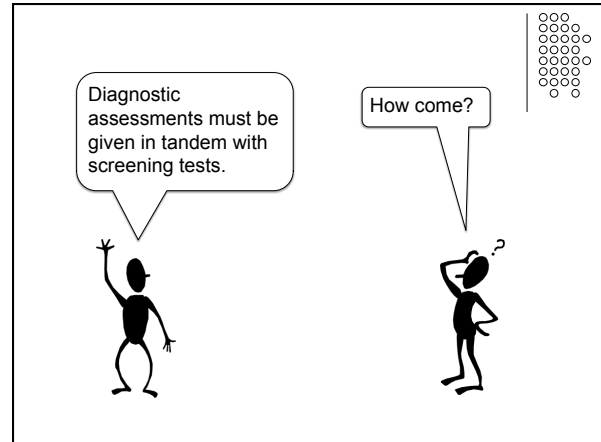
## Myths about Diagnostic Assessments



- Diagnostic assessments come in a box.
- Their main use is to identify the presence of a reading disorder.
- Diagnostic assessments must be administered by specialists.
- Diagnostic assessments are formal.
- Diagnostic assessments are time consuming and impractical.

## Myths about Diagnostic Assessments

- Diagnostic assessments should be given to all students.
- Diagnostic assessments cannot be used for screening and progress monitoring.



*We first use screening tests to determine a general pattern of difficulty. Then we use diagnostic tests to determine specific needs.*

## Using Types of Tests

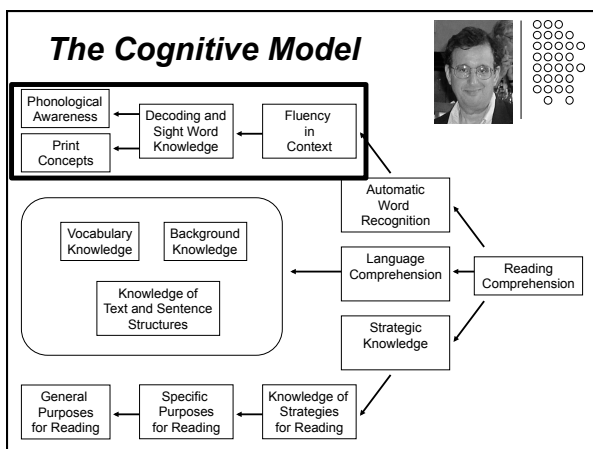
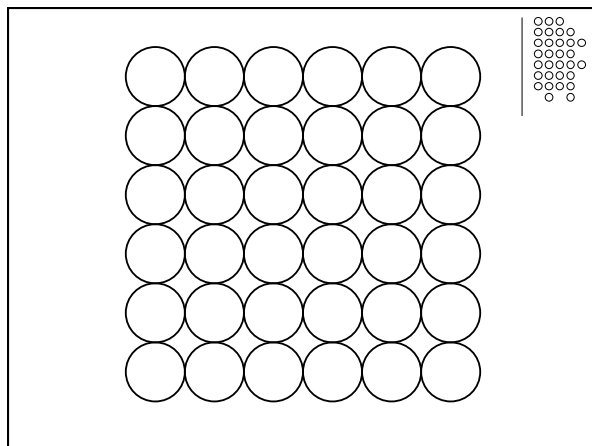
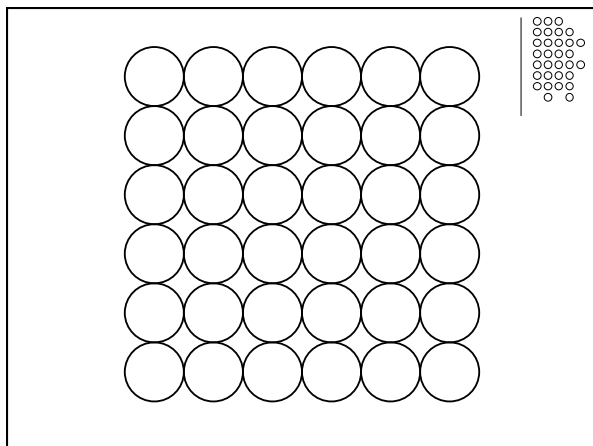
Give screening test in a given area  
(and in more basic areas if need be)



If screening identifies a problem area, give a  
diagnostic test to determine skill needs



Give progress monitoring tests periodically  
to determine impact of targeted instruction



### If fluency is weak, you should

- A. Use research-based fluency strategies like repeated readings, partner reading, etc.
- B. Check first to see if there are significant gaps in word recognition skills.

### If both fluency and word recognition are weak, you should

- A. Use research-based word recognition strategies that are explicit and systematic.
- B. Check first to see if there are significant gaps in phonological awareness.

### What diagnostic assessments do you need in this model?

Screened Need	Diagnostic Assessments
Fluency	None (You diagnose by assessing word recognition and PA.)
Word Recognition	Sight Word Inventory Phonics Inventory Spelling Inventory?
Phonological Awareness	PA Inventory

What about diagnostic assessments in vocabulary and comprehension?



There aren't any.



### Why are there no diagnostic assessments in vocabulary?

- Remember that a diagnostic assessment tells you what to teach. It breaks a general area down into specific, teachable skills.
- In the case of vocabulary, these "skills" are word meanings. A diagnostic test would tell us which of the million-plus words in English a child doesn't know.
- That's just not practical.

### Why are there no diagnostic assessments in comprehension?

- A diagnostic assessment would break down comprehension into component skills and strategies, such as:
  - Inferring the main idea
  - Inferring a cause-and-effect relationship
  - Noting a literal sequence of events
- The problem with this approach is that subtests in these areas correlate too highly.

### Why are there no diagnostic assessments in comprehension?

- Another problem is that so many factors influence comprehension.
- The entire Cognitive Model is an attempt to diagnose comprehension problems.

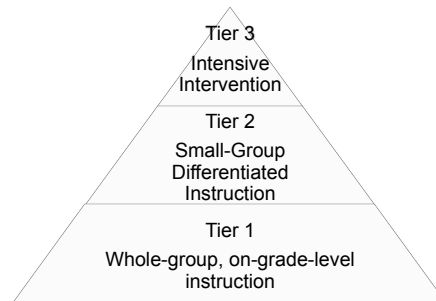
How can diagnostic assessments be used in planning small-group instruction?



One approach is to plan lessons around the needs identified by the diagnostic test and then use the same test to monitor progress.



### Vaughn's Three-Tier Model



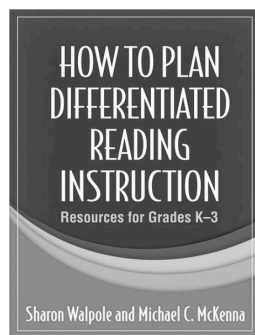
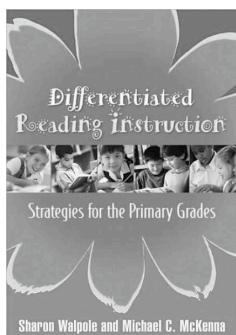
## Planning small-group lessons

1. Select resources that address the needs.
2. Group children with similar needs.
3. Deliver targeted instruction for 15 minutes a day.
4. At the end of 3 weeks, readminister the diagnostic test.
5. Judge whether, and how well, children have responded.

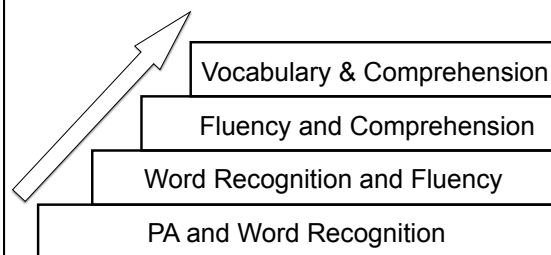
Wouldn't that lead to an unbalanced approach in some cases, with isolated skills work and no reading for meaning?



Yes, but it's only for 15 minutes, and our studies are showing that it's effective. However, we suggest targeting two areas rather than one.



## A Stairway to Proficiency

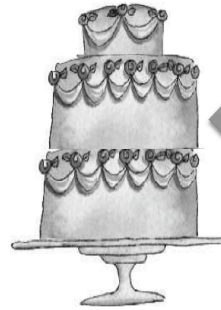


### Vaughn's Three-Tier Intervention System



← Tier 2, small-group, differentiated instruction within the classroom, only for strugglers. This is why the second layer is smaller—fewer children are involved.

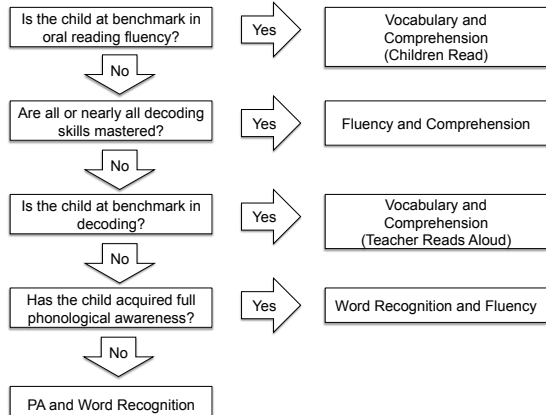
### Our Vision of the Second Tier



← Small-group, differentiated instruction within the classroom reaches all children, not just those who struggle. Our second layer is as big as the first—because every child receives whole-class *and* small-group instruction.

Let's translate the model into a series of guiding questions.


Think about the data you will need to answer them.




## Measuring the effectiveness of small-group lessons

- You can use DIBELS ORF or CBM passages for fluency.
- You can craft informal vocabulary assessments for words actually taught.
- You can use *parts* of the diagnostic assessments to judge growth.






### Professional Development



DIBELS	ORF	CBM	DIBELS
<p> <a href="#">Literacy Links</a>  <a href="#">PA Links</a>  <a href="#">Phonics Links</a>  <a href="#">Fluency Links</a>  <a href="#">Vocabulary Links</a>  <a href="#">Comprehension Links</a>  <a href="#">Writing Strategies</a>  <a href="#">Class Studies</a>  <a href="#">Exemplary Teaching</a>  <a href="#">Sample Schedules</a>  <a href="#">Resources</a>  <a href="#">Assessments</a>  <a href="#">FAQs</a>  <a href="#">Directory</a>  <a href="#">ASDC</a>  <a href="#">ISPS</a>  <a href="#">NRP</a>  <a href="#">CERA</a>  <a href="#">REU</a>  <a href="#">NCREL</a>  <a href="#">IDA</a>  <a href="#">BIS</a>  <a href="#">Oregon Readers</a>  <a href="#">UT State Shop Store</a>  <a href="#">Reading Glossary</a>  <a href="#">RT in Schools</a>  <a href="#">Just for Fun</a> </p>	<div style="font-size: 2em;">←</div>	<div style="font-size: 2em;">→</div>	<p> <b>What's New?</b>  <a href="#">GARE SD Presentations</a>  <a href="#">New Articles on Coaching</a>  <a href="#">Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse</a>  <a href="#">A Site for Some Eyes</a>  <a href="#">New Release</a>  <a href="#">Georgia Response to Intervention</a>  <a href="#">Special Education</a>  <a href="#">State of the School Reports</a>  <a href="#">Read About Lesson Plans</a>  <a href="#">Research Update</a>  <a href="#">Bake the Whole Cake Squad</a>  <a href="#">What Works Clearinghouse</a>  <a href="#">Best Evidence Encyclopedia</a>  <a href="#">Struggling Reader Conference</a>  <a href="#">LC Mini-Conference</a>  <a href="#">Asia Another Conference</a>  <a href="#">Coach and Principal Leadership - Jo Robinson</a> </p>



<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/reading/projects/garf/>