Reading readiness is an integral component of school readiness, which lays the groundwork for future schooling. Children's development of reading readiness is made up of four key areas: (1) Language; (2) Emergent Literacy; (3) Approaches to Learning; and (4) Social-Emotional Development. There are many opportunities to support the development of these skills throughout the pre-K classroom; for example, a child taking an order while playing restaurant or building a block tower during center time. During these natural play times, teachers can observe their children building on essential pre-reading skills as well as understand how to further support the learning of these skills in the future. It is crucial to realize that these learning opportunities occur constantly in the classroom, and educators play an integral role in connecting reading readiness to the children's environment.

To strengthen the connection between reading readiness and the pre-K classroom, educators can use authentic assessment to monitor and inform their instruction. To address this, the 2015 Forum on Promoting Effective Practices in Early Education, Using Authentic Assessment to Inform Reading Readiness Instruction focused on building a stronger understanding of how to utilize report data collected from educators’ authentic assessment tools to differentiate instruction in reading readiness-related domains. This part of the assessment cycle is crucial for promoting learning in the classroom, as it helps to tailor instruction for each child.

At the forum, educators were first engaged in a comprehensive presentation outlining the components of reading readiness and how to teach these skills in all aspects of the classroom.

Joy Lorenzo Kennedy, a doctoral candidate in NYU's Developmental Psychology Program, who graduated in Spring of 2014 presented What is Reading Readiness? She studies narrative development in bilingual children, with an eye toward how we can use children's stories to improve school readiness skills. Following this presentation, Suzanne Carothers, a Professor of Education at NYU|Steinhardt’s Department of Teaching and Learning then presented Opportunities to Support Reading Readiness. She has an interest in connecting curriculum design to meet the developmental needs of young children, and has done extensive teacher training and staff development work in a variety of settings for more than 30 years.
Following the Reading Readiness Presentations, the educators were divided into breakout groups based on their authentic assessment tools and were guided by facilitators through the process of authentic assessment and using report data to inform their instruction. These early childhood educators were then prompted to participate in discussions surrounding authentic assessment reports and reading readiness in more detail.

**Reading Readiness**

### Language

Throughout the pre-K year, children are constantly practicing communication and comprehension—two key facets of language development.

- Alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness help children build foundational reading skills, including decoding and comprehension.
- Vocabulary and grammar contribute to reading comprehension, enabling children to understand words and their relationships.
- Understanding the social rules of language guides children’s abilities to make meaning of spoken and written word.

### Emergent Literacy

In addition to learning about language, pre-K children also build upon their knowledge of written language.

- Understanding that print has meaning is essential for reading and writing.
- Making connections between letters and their sounds enables children to use letter-sound knowledge to read and build words.
- An appreciation for books and stories promotes increased engagement and enthusiasm for reading

### Social Emotional

In prekindergarten, children are learning how to manage their own behavior and emotions as well as gain the ability to successfully interact with others.

- Managing emotions allows children to be mentally and behaviorally ready to take on new learning goals.
- Self-regulatory skills enable children to minimize conflicting desires in favor of learning opportunities
- Interacting with peers and adults increases exposure to language by increasing the opportunities a child has to share his or her thoughts and ideas.

### Approaches to Learning

An integral part of reading readiness is how children learn the skills that are necessary to be successful learners.

- Problem solving and raising hands allow children to take advantage of educational opportunities, including those related to reading.
- Persistence and focused attention enable children to spend increased time on tasks like learning letters.
- Enthusiasm and curiosity create an increased desire to understand concepts like letters, words, and meanings.

Taken together, these skills equip pre-K children for reading and writing in kindergarten and elementary school. Reading readiness skills are important to foster, as they predict future school success.
Interpreting Reports

Each authentic assessment tool is equipped with a variety of different reports to help inform teachers and administrators about the overall growth and development of the children in their class or program. By utilizing their authentic assessment tool, educators are able to run reports that allow them to identify trends in children’s learning as well as recognize which areas demonstrate children’s strengths and which areas are in need of more support. Additionally, reports can highlight areas of interest for both the class and individual children. Once educators have reviewed this data, then they are able to adjust their classroom or program practices in order to meet the needs of the students in their classroom or program and continue to create engaging learning environments.

Generally, there are two types of reports educators can run to gain information on the skills and behaviors exhibited in the classroom: class wide reports and individual child reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Wide Reports</th>
<th>Individual Child Reports</th>
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<td>· Identify group trends in strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>· Identify areas for individualization</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Pair or group students together by abilities</td>
<td>· Track growth for every student over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Identify areas for personal learning</td>
<td>· Pinpoint areas for parents to support at home</td>
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By taking note of trends and patterns from these reports, teachers can identify:

- Areas of lesson plans that can be modified to fit students’ needs
- A need to spend more time on one domain and less in another
- Groups of children for small group activities based on children’s skills
- Materials that may support children’s learning
- Areas of individualization for each classroom child
- Opportunities for intervention for individual children or small groups of children who are behind in a particular skill
- Personal learning opportunities for teachers
Activities

To emphasize the relationship between the reading readiness domains and authentic assessment report data, educators participated in three group activities during the break-out group sessions.

Making Connections Between Authentic Assessment & Reading Readiness Skills

Each group received several items from their tool’s reading readiness related domains. As a group, they brainstormed how these skills help children develop into emergent readers.

Purpose

This activity allowed educators to apply context to the many different skills that comprise reading readiness by thinking about how these skills are present in various areas of their classrooms.

Interpreting Class Wide Reports to Inform Instruction

After reviewing the steps of interpreting a class profile report, attendees turned to their own class report data to practice identifying patterns such as class-wide areas of strength and areas of support.

Purpose

This process focused on the importance of pinpointing reading readiness related areas where the whole class needs further instruction, as well as groups of children who may need extra time on a particular skill, which then allows the educator to adjust their practice to meet these needs.

Interpreting Individual Child Reports to Inform Instruction

Using the individual child report, participants identified children’s’ areas of strength and areas that they were in need of extra support. With this information, educators brainstormed how to individualize and adjust their practice to best meet individual children’s needs.

Purpose

The final activity encouraged educators to determine which areas called for individualized instruction for a child. Additionally, meaningful discussions among educators surrounding ideas for implementing differentiated instruction created an opportunity for teachers to gain an outside perspective from their peers on how to go about the process.

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