Practical Implications of Assessment with Young Japanese EFL Learners

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Abstract

With the recent call in Japan for 'Global Citizens' and looking toward the 2020 Tokyo Olympics the Japanese Ministry of Education's MEXT decision to implement English as a core subject for Elementary 5th and 6th graders commencing 2014 in principle may come as no surprise (MEXT, 2014). As a core subject assessment and evaluation of student's progression will be an inevitable issue with the successful implementation of these classes therefore it may be theorized that readying students for the inevitability of assessment and evaluation prior to implementation of formal evaluation could prove beneficial if MEXT's long term goals are to realized (Yoshida, 2009, 2011).

The present study investigated the concepts of assessment and evaluation with reference to teaching and learning of English for young learners (YL) specifically early elementary school level of 6-8 years olds. An explanation of assessment and its utilization with regard to YL was offered along with a discussion of formative and summative assessment. The inappropriateness of formal evaluation for YL and the benefits of informal ongoing assessment for this age group was examined as well as considerations for future assessment methods for this this learning group offered. The development of an assessment tool for 6-11 year olds was presented as well as results of a pilot test of this instrument (n=23). The tool was easily administered found to be motivational as all students successfully completed the assessments within the allowed time. One weakness of this tool may be the assumption of student's ability to identify sight words, which in future designs of this tool will be an important issue to address.

Key Words: Assessment, young learners (YL), English as a foreign language (EFL), Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT)

1. Introduction

With the Japanese Ministry of Education's decision to implement English as a core subject commencing 2014 in principle, assessment and evaluation of student's progression will be an inevitable issue as with the successful implementation of these classes. (MEXT, 2014). Exposing students strategically at an earlier age for the inevitability of assessment and evaluation may prove beneficial (Yoshida, 2009). The present study investigates the concepts

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of assessment and evaluation with reference to teaching and learning of English for young learners (YL). An explanation of assessment and its utilization with regard to YL will be explored as well as an examination of formative and summative assessment for this learning group. Utilizing results from a small-scale classroom investigation an assessment tool for 6-11 year olds serving a dual purpose as an alternative to formal evaluation as well as readying students for future evaluation situations will be offered. The rational, design of this tool as well as the pedagogical implications of assessment for this learning group will be identified and a sample of this tool will be presented.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Definitions of Terms

In the research area of ESL researchers have commented that evaluation and assessment are terms closely linked to each other and in the literature are occasionally used interchangeably (Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Other ESL researchers, for example Brown (2000) considers testing and assessment in a similar light with informal testing seen as: "…an everyday and very common activity in which teachers engage almost intuitively" (p.252). On the other hand, testing has also been grouped in the category of formal assessment (Harris & McCann, 1994). For the purpose of this work the terms; test, assessment and evaluation will be discussed separately.

2.2 Test

A test as stated by Brown (2000): ' is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area." (p.252). Brown (2000) also comments that there may be an assumption of aptitude or competence offering the following example " A language test samples language behavior and infers a general ability in a language" (p.252).

2.3 Assessment

Assessment may be viewed as a wider ranging concept than testing (Harris & McCann, 1994). Nunan (1990, as cited in Smith1995) defines assessment as: "a set of processes through which we make judgments about a learner's level of skills and knowledge" (p.3). Assessment maybe viewed as differing from tests as the former does not necessarily have to be centered on a task or a result in comparison to other learners. (Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 2002) There is quite often a bond drawn between assessment and evaluation as stated by Harris and McCann (1994): "…assessment is one of the most valuable sources of information about what is happening in a learning environment" (p.2)

2.4 Why Assess?

The purpose or reason for carrying out an assessment helps to inform the type of assessment that is used. Brewster, Ellis and Girard, (2002), acknowledge Cajkler and Addelman, (2000) when they list "five main reasons" (p.245) for making use of assessment:

formative, summative, informative, diagnostic and evaluative. The broad scope of assessment can be understood from this list but it should not be considered exhaustive. It is also worth noting that in some instances, assessments undertaken for informative and diagnostic reasons may be considered under the broader concept of being formative. A formative assessment, as noted by Cameron (2001), "aims to inform on-going teaching and learning by providing immediate feedback" (p.222). The benefit of this kind of assessment is it can help motivate, build confidence and raise the learner's self esteem. Smith, (1995), reminds us that "for the young language pupil, the learning process has just started, and the learner is being formed" (p.4). The feedback formative modes of assessments have help develop a child's sense of achievement, thus an awareness of their progression is achieved. Smith, (1995), explains: "a major aim of feedback should be to strengthen the child's confidence as a language learner" (p.4). The implication here is that language holds more than just linguistic ability in esteem, Harris and McCann (1994) note that "it is important for learners to develop in terms of language and in terms of attitudes towards learning, towards language, different cultures and other people" (p.21).

The purpose behind any assessment is to gather information, Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) suggest that assessment carried out specifically for informative purposes, aims to "give pupils, parents and other teachers feedback on progress or achievement" (p.245). Assessments that are used for diagnostic purposes are not so much interested in what a child can do but aim, as noted by Cameron, (2001), "to establish what a child can and cannot yet do, so that further learning opportunities can be provided" (p.223).

Summative assessments usually appear in test form at the end of a course, their objective, according to Harris and McCann, (1994), "is to see if students have achieved the objectives set out in the syllabus" (p.28). For young learners at primary school level, this type of assessment may be considered inappropriate, Smith, (1995), notes that for this age group summative assessments do "not take the individual development of the child into consideration, neither is there anything final about the learning situation" (p.4). Harris and McCann (1994) indicate that "a lot of information gained from a summative test is often wasted because it does not feed back into the learning process" (p.28), As noted by Allan, (1996), "Marks are pretty useless as formative feedback" (p.8), from this perspective it is possible to acknowledge that for young learners at primary level, ages 6 – 11 formative assessments would seem to be most appropriate.

2.5 Three Requirements of a good assessment

There is agreement between Harris and McCann, (1994), Brown, (1994), and Cameron (2001) that an effective assessment requires three basic elements, practicality, reliability and validity. Brown (1994) indicates, "If these three axiomatic criteria are carefully met, a test should then be administrable within given constraints, be dependable, and actually measure what it intends to measure" (p.253).

Issues of practicality center on time, money, complexity, and administration Brown, (1994),

states: "a test ought to be practical – within the means of financial limitations, time constraints, ease of administration and scoring and interpretation." (p.253). Tests that are too expensive in terms of materials and resources, take too long or are complicated to mark are of course undesirable.

The second requirement of a good assessment concerns issues of reliability. An assessment needs to be reliable if the results are to be valued and the assessment viewed as credible. Issues of reliability, according to Brown, (2000), center on making sure "if you give the same test to the same subject or matched subjects on two different occasions, the test itself should yield similar results; it should have test reliability" (p.253). Factors in and out of control of the test writer affect issues of reliability. It is noted, however, that the test writer is in control, of scorer reliability. Brown, (2000) describes scorer reliability as "the consistency of scoring by two or more scorers" (p.254), which has a higher degree of reliability if a tool is provided to guide marking.

The third requirement of a good assessment centers on validity. Validity is the consideration given to "the degree to which the test actually measures what it is intended to measure" (Brown, 2000, p.254). This can be considered especially true for language testing, if we are measuring a child's ability to speak the assessment would demonstrate low validity if they were asked to write their response down in a paper and pencil format. Brown, (2000), furthers this when it is considered "In tests of language, validity is supported most convincingly by subsequent personal observation of teachers and peers" (p.255).

Arguably there are other requirements that go toward the realization of a good assessment, If an assessment is consider to be practical, reliable and valid it is said as suggested by Brown (2000), to be "well on the way to making accurate and viable judgments about the competence of the learners" (p.257).

2.6 Formal Assessment

It is possible to break down the vast nature of assessment into two distinctive branches, formal and informal. Links, were earlier established between formal assessment and testing, and it was noted that the purpose behind formal assessment was usually summative. In this section, the assignment will first explore some of the reasons testing is considered necessary. Some of the objections to formal testing will then be discussed. Brown, (2000), notes that "In formal testing, in which carefully planned techniques of assessment are used, quantification is important" (p.252). The significance quantification has, can be seen when considering Harris and McCann, (1994), who indicate that there are four main reasons that testing is necessary, these include, candidate suitability, placement, student progression, to compare student performance, as well as measure how much a student has learnt over a particular period of time. All these reasons demonstrate a need for comparison, which if it is to be done effectively and efficiently require some form of quantification.

Smith, (1995), notes "traditional testing does not meet the requirement of the modern primary school classroom" (p.8). The manner in which this age group is taught and the work

the children undertake is argued as being key for this statement (p.7). Harris and McCann (1994) are in agreement, indicating that testing generates a "feeling of divorce" (p.2) between itself and the education process. Smith, (1995), surmises, "Traditional paper and pencil tests cannot incorporate the wide repertoire of activities found in the primary EFL classroom" (p.1). Attention may also be given, at this point, to the young learners ability at processing failure Smith, (1995), concludes, "Success-oriented assessment creates a motivated, positive pupil, while failure at a young age might be crucial to the pupil's future language learning" (p.8).

The lack of feedback testing puts back into the teaching situation means as a motivational and diagnostic tool it may be perceived as ineffective. It is also possible to argue as Mckay, (2006), has done, "young learners mature at different rates and their individual progress is best monitored with reference to broadly expected developmental norms, and with expectations of difference, not in direct comparison to others" (p.317). Within this statement other issues are brought into focus such as the need for continuous assessment, the need for some subjective feedback, as well as the ability to project what the child will be able to do without the negativity associated with peer comparison.

The diverse nature of testing can be realized when attention is directed to the number of test types. Brown, (2000) indicates, "there are many kinds of tests, each with a specific purpose a particular criterion to be measured" (p.257). As mentioned before testing is not always viewed as appropriate for young learners and other methods such as can do statements may be a more suitable authentic choice. According to Harris and McCann, (1994), The 'washback effect' is "the influence of tests on teaching and learning" (p.27). In relating this specifically to formal assessment, Harris and McCann, (1994), note, "tests can have a negative influence if they contain artificial tasks not linked to real future needs" If this is to be accepted then it should also be accepted that a test which contained material that is used in the real world and is authentic, then the influence would be positive (p.27).

2.7 Informal Assessment

Informal assessment, with consideration to some of the advantages this form of assessment has, over formal assessment for young learners. According to Harris and McCann, (1994), informal assessment, "is a way of collecting information about our students' performance in normal classroom conditions" (p.5), it is possible to consider this last idea of 'normal classroom conditions', as an important one. Cameron, (2001), suggests formal assessment "contrasts vividly with the classroom experience of children who have learnt language through participation in discourse-level stories and songs" (p.217). This mismatch between learner and assessment style is further highlighted when Cameron, (2001), acknowledges the disjuncture between the interactive learning environment and the non-interactive, solo experience of doing a test" (ibid.). This places the classroom as one of the most important areas to informally assess students.

One method of carrying out informal assessment is observation. Arguments in favor of observation, as indicated by Smith, (1995), include the claim that "teachers see and observe

things related to the learner that cannot be put into content-based tasks in a test situation" (p.7). If we consider the unavoidable nature of forming judgments and opinions, as indicated by Harris and McCann (1994), then it is possible to deduct the value in trying to quantify their realization. This has met with some criticism as relying on the judgments and opinions of the teacher forefronts issues of subjectivity (p.5).

2.8 Assessment Criteria

One method of dealing with issues of subjectivity is to set criteria for the assessment. Harris and McCann, (1994), define assessment criteria "in terms of what we expect our students to be able to do" (p.9). The essential nature of this information is arguably realized when we consider the role adopted by the teacher, Harris and McCann, (1994), suggest, "we must establish clear criteria for assessing students and not only rely on rough impressions" (p.5). In some instances as in Cameron (2001, p.229) assessment criteria is referred to as assessment focus. Cameron, (2001), argues that assessment criteria have value for learners too "knowing that each focus is to be attended to will help ensure that assessment is fair" (p.229). Cameron, (2001), continues "it is fairer to assess children on the basis of what they have been taught and how using assessment activities that are familiar to children from their classroom experience. (p.220).

2.9 Grading and Marking

There are a number of different alternatives when it comes to grading and marking. As indicated by Harris and McCann, (1994), one starting point would be to consider if a student had met the criteria or not. It is possible to consider this in terms of passing or failing (p.9). This kind of marking is met with some criticism, as it is possible to argue that it does not feedback into the learning situation. A simple pass or fail does not demonstrate to the learner where their strengths and weaknesses lie. Fisher, (2005), explains "In helping children to review their learning, we can develop in them a more confident sense of themselves and increase their awareness of themselves and of the learning process" (p.135).

It is noted by Harris and McCann, (1994), that banding may be considered a more descriptive alternative method of marking it is stated: "the more bands we have the more delicate and descriptive the system will be" (p.9). Too many bands and it becomes difficult to place a learner in one band over another, this is due to the fine lines that get created between the different bands. From this position it is possible to conclude as noted by Harris and McCann, (1994), that "what we need is to find the optimum number of bands with clear and easily understandable band descriptors for our purpose" (p.9).

How the assessment is going to be weighted also requires attention when developing assessment criteria. According to Harris and McCann, (1994), weighting is defined in terms of "which areas you are going to give the most marks for" (p.8). For young learners it is possible to view this as essential, if it is not forgotten that children are developing in all areas of learning, both linguistically and non-linguistically (Nikolov, 2009).

In order to overcome these issues, both within formal and informal assessment types Harris and McCann, (1994), suggests that "it is possible to balance your formal assessment with the informal assessment you have been doing throughout the term (p.31). In order for students to demonstrate the wide repertoire of skills and abilities they have developed it would seem logical that balance would provide the best opportunity for this. By creating a balance between assessment types as noted by Brewster Ellis and Girard (2002) "can provide a more rounded view of the child's learning than a 'one-off' performance on a test" (p.247). This idea of balance comes back to fairness, a balance of methods of assessment and testing cater to the diversity within a class. Allan, (1996), continues "Assessment and should be a positive part of the pedagogic process, providing feedback to learners and to their teachers so that future teaching and learning can be more effective.

2.10 The Assessment of Linguistic and non-linguistic skills

Brewster, Ellis and Girard, (2002) indicate, "tests often deal with the four classic skills separately, although often, of course, the skills are combined in some way" (p.253). This section of the assignment is going to spend some time discussing the assessment of the four main language skills namely speaking, listening, reading and writing, as well as an introduction to some non-linguistic factors.

According to, Brown, (2000), "one of the toughest challenges of communicative testing has been the construction of practical, reliable and valid tests of oral production ability" (p.267). The complexity this demonstrates has left it possible to conclude that the assessment of oral skills has often been misrepresented with the use of paper and pencil tests (Cameron 2003).

Brewster, Ellis and Girard, (2002), allow that "formal tests are less useful for providing information on learners' willingness to communicate, take risks or their ability to get their meaning across, even if the language is full of mistakes" (p.251). The possible association that can be concluded from this is that the assessment of oral skills is best served by informal assessment. Harris and McCann (1994) highlight the importance of assessing oral skills of children during class time after all this is the environment children are used to being asked to perform in (p.9).

The assessment of written work demonstrates some of the same issues as that of speaking. As noted by Harris and McCann, (1994), "unless you are careful you can find yourself with many hours of marking, which takes time away from other aspects of teaching like lesson planning" (p.12). At primary level written assessment should be at a minimum as the children are in the early stages of written development. In commenting on an older age group than the interest of this assignment Harris and McCann, (1994), note "younger secondary learners may not need to do as much writing as older secondary students" it stands to reason that younger children are expected to do even less. In the classroom, as indicated by Harris and McCann, (1994) listening skills are developed "lockstep fashion" (p.15). This means that all the learners listen to the same text at the same time. It is possible to determine the essential nature of assessment criteria when considering the assessment of listening skills.

Harris and McCann, (1994), suggest "we formally assess student's listening proficiency by getting an impression of what they have understood or by simply looking at the answers given by any one or more student(s)" (p.15). It is not always possible to gauge how much a student has understood. Harris and McCann, (1994), note that in this form of assessment "extra linguistic clues can often be the basis on which to assess a student's listening proficiency" (p.15). This would suggest an informal approach.

Reading is another skill that is often associated with a lockstep assessment style. In this instance one text is provide for the class and then they answer questions on the text (Nikolov and Djigunovic, 2006). Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) suggest that this does not reflect the "kinds of activities used in the typical primary classroom" (p.253). It is possible to argue that the skill of reading should be considered in terms of the individual, with individual reading schemes teachers are able to monitor and observe, interacting with students in an informal approach (McKay, 2006).

As noted earlier, for educators of young children, between the ages of 6 and 11, it is important to consider the child in terms of their educational development, as well as their linguistic abilities (Hughes, 2014). If non linguistic factors are to be considered aside linguistic attributes, motivation will be positively affected, although Harris and McCann, (1994) warn: "This is countered when the warning is given that too many non-linguistic factors could render the assessment invalid due to the lesser consideration of linguistic elements" (p.21).

Four non-linguistic factors that could be included are namely: attitude, creativity and presentation, co-cooperativeness, and independence. Harris and McCann, (1994), The attitude a student has towards work and others may be considered important but as noted by Fisher, (2005), "research has consistently shown a correlation between self-esteem and achievement in reading, writing, math and other subjects" (p.122). Skills such as co-operation can arguably be designated desirable in a learner, if as suggested by Harris and McCann, (1994); one of our general educational objectives is "to develop the ability to co-operate with other people" (p.22). The same is true for independence "Students should be trained to work alone" (p.23). If a balance between linguistic and non-linguistic elements is achieved a deeper understanding of the learner may be developed (Nikolov and Djigunovic, 2006).

3. Research Questions:

The purpose of the current research is to investigate the viability of assessment with YL with the following research questions considered:
1. Is informal formative assessment a suitable alternative to formal assessment for Young learners (YL)?
2. Is an ongoing assessment tool appropriate for young learners?

4. Method

4.1 Learners and Context of use

The purpose of this informal formative assessment is to supply teachers with an

instrument to aid teachers in coming to a decision as to the students understanding of the lesson and assist teachers in further lesson planning. The intention of this assessment will be motivational for the students showing their learning progress in the short as well as long-term.

This Elementary school second grade class, located in a rural area of Japan 11 boys and 12 girls (N=23) between the ages of 7-8, learning English on an average of once a week in a 45 minute class with a native English speaking teacher. The students maybe considered of mixed ability as some of the students have exposure to English outside of the classroom, attending private English Lessons (Butler, 2007).

4.2 Assessment Objectives

The intention of this instrument is to maintain and keep YL interest by insuring that the task kept at a level that the students are challenged but at the same time able to complete the tasks successfully (McKay, 2006). As the classes are very short and infrequent the school insists that no more than 10 minutes per class be spent on assessment. Furthermore because of time constraints this instrument must be easily administered and explained. A formative assessment may be considered effective as it is hoped that the information obtained from this instrument impact further lesson planning prompt feedback is key (Munoz, 2006).

Although in completing this instrument a certain amount of reading and writing must be achieved by the students this tool will mainly look at the progress of vocabulary development. As the majority of class time has been devoted to vocabulary development this seemed to be an appropriate decision North, Ortega and Sheehan, 2011).

With YL it seems that informal assessment is a more suitable form of assessment, as it places less pressure on staff and students. The classes typically consist of group/pair work and very little in individual seatwork. This instrument must also take this fact into consideration, as it would be considered most beneficial for students to be assessed in an environment similar to the actual learning environment (Butler and Takeuchi 2006). As the assessment will take place during time that is generally allotted for deskwork a written assignment would be considered a natural classroom activity aiding in increased reliability (Munoz, 2006). This assessment is considered fair, as students have performed similar tasks with regard to this content. Aiding with practicality No marks will be assigned in the assessment, as this was considered time-consuming. It is hoped that a positive washback effect be achieved with teachers positive comments to the participating students feeding back in into students learning.

4.3 Details and Rationale of the structure-Context and Visual Support

This assessment tool is designed as an accompaniment to instruction and learning over a five-week period. (See figure 1) During this period students have been studying a unit of the numbers 1-10. The expectation at the end of the unit is that the students be able to count from 1-10 recognize the numbers as a numbers and also as words. It would seem a

valid consideration that the student learning with regard to this content be assessed. As the students have performed similar tasks in the past it would also be satisfy the important principle of fairness (Nikolov and Djigunovic, 2006).

4.4 Language of Rubrics

Rubrics have been included but the students are not expected to read the instructions. They are provided as a guideline for teachers and as the rubric language is repetitive information there is an expectation that the students will eventually become familiar with the instructional vocabulary. Additionally the instructions will provide information about the assessment for parents or caretakers, as eventually students will take these assessments home.

4.5 Use of Demonstration

As these YLs are unfamiliar with this type of assessment working through the first question together was viewed as a more practical and time efficient method with the students able to communicate whether they understood the instructions.

4.6 Task Types

The tasks included in this assessment are designed to supplement as well as augment the instruction and learning occurring in the classroom. These YLs have been doing numerous activities with regard to number recognition for example playing matching games. The tasks in this assessment are familiar to the students as in previous units similar formats were used with regard to other themes such as color or letter recognition (Cameron, 2001).

4.7 Number of tasks

Due to time constraints this assessment has to be short no more than 10 minutes each class over a five-week period. The 5 tasks are organized to increase in difficulty, starting with counting, and recognition of numerals continuing with word recognition. As this assessment tool should be considered an informal assessment no grades or marks will be assigned as doing so may cause reduced motivation and self-confidence in students. The teacher will give feedback and encouragement to the YLs (See Appendix).

4.8 How much time will be allotted for the assessment

The school requests no more than 10 minutes per lesson be allotted for deskwork or individual activities. This is reflected in the assessment tool. The last 10 minutes of class will be used to administer this tool (see Table 1). It is hoped that this tool be motivational and success-oriented for the YLs therefore no marks are given but upon completion of each part of the assessment the students receive a reward sticker. There is also a concern for practicality with marking being considered time-consuming.

Table 1   Schedule of Assessment Activities

Week	Assessment Activity	Time Allotted
1	Let's Count Circle the Number	5-10 minutes
2	Let's Count 1-5 Word Search	5 minutes
3	Let's Count 6-10 Word Search	5 minutes
4	Let's Count 1-10 Word Search	10 minutes
5	Let's Count Matching 1-10	5-10 minutes

5. Results

Referring merely at the data from this pilot study (n=23) demonstrated all students were able to complete all of the assessment activities either with or without help (See Table 2). Activity 1 reported 87% of the students were able to successfully complete the assessment activity with 13% needing some sort of help. Activity 2 reported 74% of students were successful without aid but 26% needed some assistance. Activity 3 showed an increase with 83% of the students completing the assessment without help and 17% receiving aid from the teacher. Activity 4 showed an increase 96% of the students successfully completing the assessment and 4% aided in some manner by the teacher. Activity 5 reported identical results (See Table 2).

Table 2   Pilot Test of Ongoing Assessment Tool (N=23)

Assessment Activity Number	Successfully Completed Unaided %	Successfully Completed Aided by Scaffolding %	Unable to complete %
1. Let's Count Circle the Number	87%	13%	0
2. Let's Count 1-5 Word Search	74%	26%	0
3. Let's Count 6-10 Word Search	83%	17%	0
4. Let's Count 1-10 Word Search	96%	4%	0
5. Let's Count Match 1-10	96%	4%	0

6. Discussion

As stated previously this assessment tool is to complement current informal assessment methods such as observation, the teachers should utilize this tool as feedback for future teaching and learning (North et al, 2011). As no marks are assigned assessment criteria for teachers should be viewed formatively with the results used in improving further instruction. Using observation techniques to monitor students as well as utilize scaffolding techniques to insure that the vocabulary is understood by the students, offering help if needed resulting in all students successfully completing the activity. In these instances the teacher should note students who are having difficulty with the task for future lesson planning. Although students were encouraged students to work independently the classroom atmosphere should mimic the usual classroom situation and YL should not be made uncomfortable, as it may affect student progress and success with the task (Cameron,2001).

Motivational feedback in the form of encouraging comments was utilized aiding students in completing the task successfully. As the students progressed through the assessment

activities the need for scaffolding decreased (See Table 2). It may be theorized that as students became more familiar with the activities and the achievement attained from the successful completion their motivation may have been enhanced for the next assessment activity. As the tasks should be motivational, YLs attitude toward the assessment may be noted for further development of this tool.

7. Conclusion

The present study investigated the concepts of assessment and evaluation with reference to teaching and learning of English for young learners (YL) specifically early elementary school level of 6-8 years olds. Along with a definition of terms, an explanation of assessment and its utilization with regard to YL was discussed as well as a discussion of formative and summative assessment offered. The inappropriateness of formal evaluation for YL and the benefits of informal ongoing assessment for this age group were examined with an assessment tool utilizing the concept of ongoing assessment for 6-11 year olds developed for future implementation. Although the results from this study are preliminary in nature this tool may be deemed useful as it is easily administered by teachers and appears to keep students interest which is a challenge with this learning group. One drawback of this tool may be the assumption of student's ability to identify sight words. In future designs of this tool this will be an important issue to address.

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Appendix
Assessment Tool Sample

Week 4

Name_____

1-10 Word Search

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t   d   p   f   m   n   q   t   o
e   t   w   o   o   i   h   e   n
n   i   n   e   n   n   f   q   e
j   e   b   z   e   e   i   k   e
s   i   x   e   s   e   v   e   n
c   g   g   t   n   n   e   e   j
n   h   m   t   h   r   e   e   s
f   t   l   p   t   x   j   y   j
i   a   f   o   u   r   v   v   u
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one	two
three	four
five	six
seven	eight
nine	ten

Week 5

Let's count

Name_____

Match the number with the word.

1 ·	· seven
2 ·	· six
3 ·	· two
4 ·	· ten
5 ·	· three
6 ·	· nine
7 ·	· five
8 ·	· eight
9 ·	· one
10 ·	· four