

Teacher Feedback from the Linking Calibration of Reading and Writing Assessments

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This report compiles the feedback of the teachers who participated in the link calibration of Reading and Writing materials in March 2001. Feedback is generally positive and constructive.

Reading and Writing Assessments

Question 1

Was the content appropriate for the age level and ability of the students?

There is a high level of satisfaction with the content of the Reading and Writing

Table 1

Was content appropriate in both tests for age and ability of students?

	Yes	No	Both	No Answer	Total
N	46	2	11	5	64
%	72	3	17	8	100

papers, where the majority of schools felt that the content was either appropriate for all or the majority of their students, as summed up by one teacher who wrote “*across all papers there were various formats that all students could find something they could/should latch onto*”, although some respondents felt that the tests were “*okay for middle → tops but insufficiently easy material for slow learners and new speakers of English*” .

Question 2

Was the content interesting and engaging for the students?

45 of the respondents, while indicating that the content was interesting and engaging, did not comment. The remaining teachers’ comments focussed upon the variety of stories and the use of the various resources found in the assessment tools. For example “*The illustrations and variety appealed*”; “*Enjoyed photo’s, pictures, diagrams etc and a variety of*

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This calibration was conducted with students who had completed the writing papers in November 2000. This permitted linking of Calibration 1 reading and writing papers. A total of 79 schools participated in the trial. A total of 64 responses from 40 identified schools were received. Four replies were received from unidentified schools. This represents a school return rate of 55 %.

The comments were generally coded using a “Yes”, or “No”. “Both yes and no” or “No Answer”. The category “Yes” indicated a favourable or positive response to a question, a “No” an unfavourable or negative response to the question, and “Both yes and no” indicated a response that contains both positive and negative comments. “No answer” included comments that were incapable of meaningful interpretation. (For example, “*I think so*”, which could have been either a positive comment or a negative one).

questions”; “They enjoyed extending their own knowledge from what they read”.

Table 2

Was content interesting and engaging?

	Yes	No	Both	No answer	Total
N	52	3	4	5	64
%	81	5	6	8	100

Concerns were expressed that the tests were not well designed either for high or low achievers (i.e., “while it engaged the middle 50% well, those at each end were lost”).

Question 3

Was the level of difficulty across the paper appropriate?

35 commented favourably but did not elucidate. A further 20 commented that the tasks seemed to range from easy to hard (e.g., “Started simple but that’s good to develop the confidence”) or used time as a measure of the children’s ability to cope with the tests (e.g., “Most of them finished after about 30 minutes”; “Hard to say – many finished very early”).

Table 3

Was the level of difficulty in the papers appropriate?

	Yes	No	Both	No answer	Total
N	58	2	0	4	64
%	91	3	0	6	100

The negative comments focussed upon the language capabilities of the children to successfully negotiate the text (e.g., “rather difficult vocabulary in some places – children today don’t have a wide vocabulary”; “children had difficulty with reading some texts”). Three comments highlighted the language used in the test created problems (i.e., “some questions difficult due to language used”).

Question 4

Is there any other general comment you would like to make about the paper?

39% of respondents made no response to this question, and 5 people (8%) made uninterpretable comments such as “star colours”.

Table 4

General comments on the paper

	Yes	No	Both	None	Unint	Sug	Total
N	13	15	4	25	5	2	64
%	20	23	6	39	8	3	100

The majority of the negative responses were concerned with errors contained within the paper and the effect this had on the teachers and children concerned (i.e., “Page 6 – the line from the divers mask led to a fish instead of C – this was confusing for some students (and the teacher!)”). There were 2 respondents that offered suggestions (i.e., “it could be administered in two sessions of 20/25 mins to cater for attention spans”). There was little difference in the percentage of respondents whose general comment was either negative (23%) or positive (20%).

Question 5

What was the student’s response to the paper?

The numbers represent number of responses. Multiple responses were allowed on each form.

Response Category	N
Enjoyment	
Positive/Enjoyable/Interesting	42
Engaged	3
Boring/not fun	3
Timing	
Finished early	3
Good length	1
Too short	1
Difficulty	
Some children found it easy	9
Good balance of hard & easy	8
Some children found it hard	7
Challenging	2
Got harder as it moved on	2

A clear majority of the students enjoyed the experience. On other matters (such as difficulty

level and length) there was a division of opinion. Comparisons with PAT's were frequent and favourable.

- "The majority enjoyed it. "It was fun" "It was easy". Several made comments on the interesting topics they read about"
- "They found it quite enjoyable, as tests go!"
- "Mostly positive as children felt under no pressure" "Very positive. Most of the children enjoyed it and had fun answering it"
- "It was 'fun', 'good', 'interesting', 'enjoyable', they 'liked shading the boxes', 'interesting answering it different ways' and 'good stories'"

Concluding Comment

The evaluation of the Writing tests conducted in November 2000 was completed by teachers from the same schools as this linking calibration. Comparison of the evaluations showed there was little difference in the percentage of respondents that found the content appropriate for the age level and ability of the students (72% and 69% respectively). In the Reading tests, a higher percentage of respondents indicated that the content was interesting and engaging for the students (81%) than that of the Writing tests (69%). Again, a higher percentage of responses to the Reading tests (91%) indicate that the level of difficulty was appropriate (as opposed to 65% in the Writing tests).

In both Reading and Writing tests respondents indicated concerns in their general comments about the length of the paper, although the responses were split between it taking too long and being too short. Both the Reading and Writing tests were found to generally be enjoyable for students, although only half of the students found the Writing tests enjoyable as compared to a clear majority in the Reading Tests.

In the Writing tests, there were three times as many students that needed more time than those who finished early, whereas in the Reading tests, the ratio was reversed (i.e., more children finished early than needed more time).