



TEACHING AND LEARNING RESEARCH EXCHANGE

K-Grade 3: Improved Literacy Success Through Assessment and Evaluation

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	ii
Teacher Introduction.....	ii
Project Introduction.....	1
Goals	1
Objectives.....	1
Outcomes	2
Timeline	3
History.....	3
Process.....	4
Kindergarten	5
Kindergarten Rubrics	6
Grade 1.....	8
Grade 1 Rubric.....	9
Grade 2.....	10
Grade 2 Rubric.....	11
Grade 3.....	12
Grade 3 Rubric.....	14
Support for the K-3 Reading Initiative	15
Summary of the Goals.....	15
Conclusion.....	16
References	17
List of tables	
Table 1. The Overall Timeline for the K-3 Reading Initiative Project	2
Table 2. K-3 Initiative Kindergarten Rubrics	6
Table 3. K-3 Initiative Grade 1 Rubric.....	9
Table 4. K-3 Reading Initiative Grade 2 Rubric	12
Table 5. K-3 Initiative Grade 3 Rubric.....	14

Executive Summary

The K-3 Reading Initiative project undertaken by Holy Family Roman Catholic Separate School Division brought teachers from kindergarten to Grade 3 together into grade-alike professional learning communities in order to support student learning and to make decisions based on data collection. Key to the process was teacher input and collaboration to develop common assessments across the division in the same grade and across grades. The K-3 Reading Initiative is a comprehensive and strategic approach intended to decrease the number of students at risk of school failure and increase the number of students reading at grade level.

Teacher Introduction

In an evolving educational world of accountability, data driven decision-making has been a catalyst for developing processes that support not only student learning, but also teaching and decisions regarding budget and programs. The K-3 Reading Initiative project undertaken by Holy Family Roman Catholic Separate School Division brought teachers from kindergarten to Grade 3 together into grade alike professional learning communities in order to support student learning and to make decisions based on data collection. Key to the process was teacher input and collaboration to develop common assessments across the division in the same grade and across grades. This is our journey: its history and conception, its future, its processes, its conflicts and resolutions and, in the end, its benefits to our students and teachers.

Project Introduction

Assessing school readiness is a critical factor in the education of young students. It is the school's responsibility to support evaluation and assessment strategies that will increase proficiency in the early years. The K-3 Reading Initiative is a comprehensive and strategic approach intended to decrease the number of students at risk of school failure and increase the number of students reading at grade level.

GOALS

The first goal of the project was the development of outcome rubrics as one of the assessment and evaluation practices that would be used to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture for each student. Through professional dialogue, teachers had the opportunity to identify, review, analyze and reflect upon assessment and evaluation practices.

The second goal was to develop excellence and accountability through professional dialogue, reflection and evaluation. The development and implementation of various assessment methods in a professional learning community support the necessary review and criticism of these strategies and promote excellence.

The third goal was to bridge best practices and intervention from one year to the next to ensure academic success.

The fourth goal was to create a profile tracking system for all students. Collaboration with members of the educational team including the previous and preceding grade teachers, principals, student services teachers and speech pathologists provides a comprehensive profile for each student.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the project was determined by the teachers.

It is our goal that 95 per cent of students will be reading at grade level by the end of Grade 3. The purpose of the project is to identify our at-risk students and to implement services to support student success at a young age.

The objectives of the initiative were to:

- Provide a basis for evaluation of instructional programming.
- Develop outcome rubrics and provide benchmarks of students' work and ability.
- Provide information to teachers to help make decisions and choose effective intervention practices.
- Tie instruction to assessment.
- Extend assessment strategies.

- Simulate collaborative professional dialogue and extend professional leadership.
- Document the progress of designated students.
- Provide opportunities to reflect on curriculum implementation and effective practices.
- Provide opportunities for the development and evaluation of assessment tools.
- Develop criteria for the selection of screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessment measures.
- Identify screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcomes assessment measures to review and analyze.
- Use information for valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and classroom-based assessments to make instructional decisions for students and to ensure accountability for these decisions.
- Establish a clear schedule for assessments and use assessments that are appropriate for the skills and goals at each grade level and across the division.

OUTCOMES

The outcomes were to:

- Increase parental awareness and involvement.
- Increase achievement for all students.
- Continue monitoring each student's progress on a regular basis.
- Intervene immediately with at-risk students.
- Put effective intervention practices into effect immediately.
- Enhance teacher reflection for the purpose of best practice through implementation of curriculum, teaching methodology and assessment practices.
- Increase collaborative structure and planning that involves school, parents and community.
- Provide a strong foundation for students to become active participants in lifelong learning.
- Establish powerful professional learning communities across the division.

TIMELINE

TABLE 1. THE OVERALL TIMELINE FOR THE K-3 READING INITIATIVE PROJECT

Kindergarten Planning 2004-05	Data Collection 2005-08
Grade 1 Planning 2005-06	Data Collection 2006-09
Grade 2 Planning 2006-07	Data Collection 2007-10
Grade 3 Planning 2007-08	Data Collection 2008-11

History

All teachers from kindergarten to Grade 3 were involved with this project. Every teacher in our division teaching Language Arts from K-3 was directly involved with this project. Teachers in those grade levels who are not directly involved in Language Arts also attended some meetings and had input from the start, although their ongoing roles differed from the Language Arts teachers. This project was not undertaken on behalf of our French immersion students from kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2, but teachers of these students have also been invited to stay involved from the beginning so as to remain informed and part of the process. The reason for this is that our French immersion students do not begin English Language Arts until Grade 3. The Grade 3 French immersion teacher is, however, involved as the Grade 3 students begin their Language Arts studies in the English language.

This project was first conceived prior to the Holy Family RCSSD amalgamation and has, therefore, been through some changes, re-vamps and re-configurations. Initially, Estevan Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Weyburn Roman Catholic Separate School Division, St. Olivier Roman Catholic Separate School Division and South Central School Division were the school divisions involved. Holy Family Roman Catholic School Division was formed with the amalgamation of Estevan Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Weyburn Roman Catholic Separate School Division and St. Olivier Roman Catholic Separate School Division. South Central Schools involved with the project have amalgamated with South East Cornerstone and have opted to withdraw from the original project and to work on projects within their own division, leaving our four schools committed to this project.

The project was originally conceived by Shelley Rowein, who at the time was the Assistant Director of Education for the Shared Services schools, and Lisa Kuntz, who was, at that time, the Superintendent of Student Services. With changes to the structure of the school divisions, there have been some different faces at the tables, but the Director of Education for Holy Family Roman Catholic Separate School Division, Shelley Rowein, and superintendent of Education, Lisa Kuntz, remained committed to the project.

Process

The K-3 Reading Initiative provided a basis for evaluation of instructional programming through grade-alike meetings. The development of outcome rubrics provided benchmarks of students' work and ability across grades and throughout the division. It provided information to teachers to help make decisions and choose effective intervention practices. The initiative served to tie instruction to assessment and to extend assessment strategies. It supported collaborative professional dialogue and extended professional leadership. The initiative documented the progress of all students. It provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on curriculum implementation and effective practices and develop common evaluations of assessment tools.

The initiative supported the development of criteria for the selection of screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessment measures. By identifying screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcomes, assessment measures were constantly reviewed and analyzed. Teachers used information for valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and classroom based assessments to make instructional decisions for students and to ensure accountability for these decisions. The grade-alike professional learning groups established a clear schedule for assessments and used assessments that were appropriate for the skills and goals at each grade level.

The K-3 Reading Initiative began with meetings in which all the partners from kindergarten to Grade 3 were involved in dialogue, discussion and, sometimes, conflict and resolution. They shared what individual programs looked like, the needs of their schools and communities, how they were the same as or different from others. They also proceeded to determine criteria, assess according to the criteria, select assessment tools, collect data and use that data to improve student learning.

Some of the professional dialogue was centered on the process of undertaking a new challenge: Why are we doing this? Where is this coming from? Why change what I am doing when it has been working so well? Some of the dialogue was centred on taking stock of our existing programs: Here is my program and what I like about it and what I find difficult. Here are the expectations put upon me by other colleagues/administration/ community. Here is what my students bring to my classroom. Here are some trends we see in students. The dialogue eventually focused on determining common ground and exploring philosophies and ideologies as teachers of young students.

As the process moved along, our school division applied for and received a grant from the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation in the amount of \$2,600. That money was used to address the costs incurred for teacher release time. There were afternoon planning meetings to attend, as well as release time to complete the assessments. Not to be forgotten were the costs of travel for everyone involved. Most of the funding was consumed by the meetings which were held prior to the amalgamation process but, following amalgamation, Holy Family Division entered into a contract for the remaining \$600 to help fund the first year of implementation.

Eventually, it was decided that the best way to proceed with the project would be to divide into grade level groups and to begin with the kindergarten teachers. The kindergarten teachers would spend the year meeting to determine criteria, assessment tools, and data collection. The following year, teachers would implement the project and that group of students would be the first group for which we would collect and analyze data on an ongoing basis.

KINDERGARTEN

The first task as a group of kindergarten teachers was to collectively agree on the criteria to determine students performing at, or above, grade level in order to be ready for Grade 1. To facilitate the process, teachers brought 10-15 objectives to the first meeting that they believed to be the most important literacy objectives to achieve this goal. These objectives were taken from the kindergarten section of the Language Arts Curriculum. All the objectives were shared, put on a whiteboard and then discussed, sometimes disagreed upon, disseminated, discarded or agreed upon, and, eventually, finalized into 14 objectives.

As well, kindergarten teachers entered into professional dialogue with our Grade 1 teachers to discuss the objectives appropriate for the kindergarten students and which objectives were better left to be dealt with in the Grade 1 development year, as they were perhaps considered inappropriate for kindergarten and appropriate for Grade 1, according to both curricula. Again, after much discussion, some debates, some concessions and many revisions, kindergarten teachers had a product that met the needs of students.

The next step was to set about creating a common rubric for everyone to use in assessing these objectives. A rubric key was developed using the following indicators: Beginning, Developing, Accomplished (grade level) and Exemplary. This process was lengthy and painstaking and many changes, corrections and clarifications have been made to these objectives and the rubric criteria to ensure that they were clear and concise.

Kindergarten teachers decided that the literacy rubric objectives would be assessed with our students two times each year, in the months of January and May, to show the students' knowledge in January and to show their growth by May. Following this, the teachers set about creating and sharing common assessments, ensuring that all kindergarten teachers were assessing in the same way, using the same assessment tools and, therefore, the same standards. Eventually, the literacy rubrics were transferred to report cards to ensure that the report card evaluation and our K-3 literacy evaluations were not doubling up or overlapping each other.

Finally, a common report card was developed to include the literacy objectives as well as the rubric indicators (Beginning, Developing, Accomplished and Exemplary) for the purpose of aligning what we were already doing with what we were undertaking on behalf of this project. In effect, we created a baseline for the kindergarten students in our entire division. All kindergarten students would meet the same criteria to help them on their journey towards becoming readers. If a student moved from one school in our division to another, he/she would be assessed in the same way, a smoother transition would occur and he/she would have the same opportunities to be a reader as his/her peers in the new school environment.

Lastly, kindergarten teachers created a timeline for the kindergarten school year and created and collected a few more data collection tools to help identify students at risk as quickly as possible, and in as many ways as possible, to provide the proper services to assist the child.

TABLE 2. K-3 INITIATIVE KINDERGARTEN RUBRICS

Rating Scale / Objectives	1. Beginning	2. Developing	3. Accomplished (at grade level)	4. Exemplary
1. Identifies letters of the alphabet	Recognizes 0-5 letters	Recognizes 5-10 letters	Recognizes 10-15 letters	Recognizes 16-26 letters
2. Knows some sight words	Does not recognize any words including own name	Recognizes own name	Recognizes 5-10 words	Knows more than 10 words
3. Experiments with written communication	Draws	Scribbles	Prints random letters with meaning	Beginning to write some phonemic sounds
4. Demonstrates reading behaviours	Looks at a book from back to front	Looks at a book from top to bottom	Looks at a book from left to right	Tracks one word at a time
5. Understands the difference between a letter and a word	Does not recognize what words or letters are	Recognizes letters as letters	Differentiates between a letter and a word	Can count the number of words in the sentence
6. Is able to copy simple words and phrases	Cannot copy simple words	Copies one word	Copies a phrase	Copies a series of words left to right and top to bottom
7. Joins in and contributes to shared language	Does not join in	Joins in sporadically or inappropriately	Participates consistently and appropriately	Shows leadership in group discussions
8. Listens to a story and relates sequence of events	Cannot give any information regarding the story	Gives independent details, but not the main idea	Retells the story in sequence	Retells the story in greater detail
9. Beginning to make meaningful predictions	Cannot give any information about the story	Makes erroneous or illogical predictions	Predicts a reasonable outcome	Uses insight, reasoning and previous knowledge to derive the correct outcome
10. Uses basic everyday language	Cannot communicate basic needs or personal experiences	Expresses needs and shares ideas but uses incorrect grammar, syntax and vocabulary	Effectively uses correct grammar, syntax and vocabulary	Consistently uses correct grammatical structure, syntax and vocabulary
11. Demonstrates writing-like behaviour	Marks randomly all over the page	Imitates words	Writes left to right	Writes left to right on a line
12. Follows simple directions	Follows one step directions with reminders and support	Follows two-step directions with support	Follows three-step directions	Follows directions with more than three steps
13. Printing of name	Prints "magic" writing	Prints the first letter of name and some subsequent letters	Prints all the letters in name in the correct order	Prints according to printing rules (size, space, formation, pencil grip, pressure)
14. Will recognize and generate some phonemic awareness	See each individual area rubrics as follows: rhyming, alliteration, segment clapping, sounds of letters			
• Rhyming	Cannot hear a rhyme	Hears and recognizes a rhyme	Generates a rhyme	Creates many rhymes in a word family
• Alliteration	Does not hear when two words begin with the same letter	Hears when words start with the same letter	Hears and isolates the beginning sound	Generates other words that start with the same sound
• Segment clapping	Cannot clap or clap syllables	Claps a segment	Claps two segments	Claps more than three segments
• Knows the sounds of letters	Has no sound/letter correspondence	Recognizes that letters make sounds	Knows up to 10 sounds of the letters	Knows more than 10 sounds of the letters

The kindergarten data collection tools are as follows:

MAY/JUNE

- Kindergarten orientation and play day is held for new students and, following orientation, each kindergarten teacher fills out the kindergarten class summary sheet for each student. These sheets are to be sent to the office by mid-September.

SEPTEMBER

- Have speech and language screens completed with all kindergarten students by the speech and language pathologists.
- Organize team collaboration meetings to identify students considered at risk as identified by the orientation class summary and compile baseline charts for those students.
- Develop an intervention plan for these students through team collaboration. Monitor at-risk students all year and implement changes, whether deletions or additions, whenever determined to be necessary. This is not a one-time task, but an ongoing task.

OCTOBER

- Administer the STAR Early Literacy test to all students. This is a computerized literacy test that our division purchased through a company called Renaissance Learning, Inc. As the title indicates, this computerized test addresses the students' literacy readiness skills. Our division also uses other programs through Renaissance Learning such as STAR Reading test and Accelerated Reader Program. Reports are read and results are communicated with the parents. There are many reports available, and some of the diagnostic student and diagnostic class reports give very clear indications as to where students' strengths and weaknesses lie. Our division has purchased the accompanying Power Lessons which can be delivered to address their weaknesses.

NOVEMBER

- Complete report cards and hold parent-teacher interviews.

DECEMBER

- Administer STAR Early Literacy test again.
- Tabulate the previous year's data and hold meetings to analyze data.

JANUARY

- Assess all students using the Kindergarten Literacy Rubrics.
- Re-assess at-risk students as well as other students whose rubric results may indicate that they need assistance.

FEBRUARY

- All kindergarten teachers complete the Early Development Instrument (EDI) surveys on all students. Our school division is implicated in a federal initiative to identify children's needs when they first come to school in an effort to deliver better services to our communities and to address pre-school-aged children who are at risk, in an attempt to assist them before they enter school.

MARCH

- Complete report cards and hold parent-teacher interviews for the second reporting period.

MAY

- Assess all students using the Kindergarten Literacy Rubrics.
- Administer final STAR Early Literacy test.

MAY/JUNE

- Hold kindergarten orientation and play day for new students.

JUNE

- Hold transition meetings with Grade 1 teachers to pass along the collected data.
- Complete class summary sheets. Insert one copy into each student's cumulative folder and send one copy to the board office.

GRADE 1

As the kindergarten teachers began to collect data for their students, Grade 1 teachers began to meet to develop the rubrics, the evaluation criteria and the data collection tools. Our Grade 1 teachers met approximately every three months. Substitute teachers were provided on the afternoons that the meetings were held and the meetings were chaired by our director and/or superintendent.

To begin the process, the Grade 1 teachers met with the kindergarten teachers to discuss their objectives. They reviewed the kindergarten objectives and exchanged ideas outlining expectations for the beginning of Grade 1. Through these shared discussions, it was determined that the kindergarten objective met the expectations for the beginning of Grade 1. Students determined by the kindergarten assessments to be accomplished on the kindergarten objective would be considered ready to become readers in Grade 1.

The Grade 2 teachers then collaborated with Grade 1 teachers when the planning for the reading initiative was near completion. They exchanged information and ideas and shared discussions with them regarding the expectations for the beginning of the Grade 2 year. These ideas were then discussed, modified, combined and re-written to form the final nine objectives.

Using the nine objectives, the Grade 1 rubric was developed (see following page).

After the objectives and rubrics were developed, data collection tools were agreed upon and the Grade 1 teachers developed a comprehensive form which includes general information about each student, intervention planning and at-risk identification. The inside of the form includes the objectives and the assessment tools.

TABLE 3. K-3 INITIATIVE GRADE 1 RUBRIC

Name of Student: _____ School: _____

* Red (mid-year) *Blue (year-end)

Rating Scale Objective	1. Beginning	2. Developing	3. Accomplished (End of June)	4. Exemplary
1. Read fluently at grade level & 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word by word phonetically decoding words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes high frequency sight words reading in phrases with some self-correcting beginning to read for meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> read like you are talking uses appropriate pacing uses appropriate punctuation uses appropriate expression reading for meaning recognizes majority of sight words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads fluently using accuracy, expression and punctuation reads at or above grade level
2. Identify words by sight (See attached word list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes 0-100 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes 100-150 words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes 150-200 words from the list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognizes more than 200 words
3. Recalls details, events, characters, setting and sequence of events (student read)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to retell a story with one or two of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> details events characters setting sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retell a story using 3 of the following with prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> details events characters setting sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> retell a story using their own words with few prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> details events characters setting sequence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to retell a story using all components of the object with no prompt make connections to their own experiences
4. Answer comprehension questions at various levels based on the reading (knowledge, application) (student read)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anything below 80% according to the reporting period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall comprehension of testing 80-90% according to the reporting period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overall comprehension of testing Mastery 90-100% according to the reporting period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistently achieving 90-100% reading materials above grade level according to the reporting period
5. Recognizes rhyme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can hear and recognize some rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can generate a rhyme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can create many rhymes in word families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete and/or create his/her own rhyming pattern
6. Recognizes all phonetics • using the cueing systems to construct meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student reads at frustration level with 0-60% of the specified words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student reads at instructional level with 70-80% accuracy of the specified words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student reads at independent level with 90% accuracy of the specified words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student reads at independent level with more than 90% accuracy of the specified words
7. Reread own written simple sentences to ensure ideas make sense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rereads own written simple sentences to ensure ideas make sense with assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rereads own written simple sentences to ensure ideas make sense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rereads own written text to ensure ideas make sense with some assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rereads own written text to ensure ideas make sense without assistance
8. Read and follow directions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads and follows 1-step directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads and follows 2-step directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads and follows 3-step directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reads and follows more than 3-step directions
9. Participates in individual, small group or whole class reading (oral and/or silent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seldom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sometimes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student is usually involved in reading by tracking and/or reading aloud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> student is consistently involved in reading by tracking and/or reading aloud

The Grade 1 timeline for data collection for the K-3 Reading Initiative is as follows:

OCTOBER

- Administer the STAR Early Literacy test.

NOVEMBER

- Complete the first reporting period reading rubric.
- Hold three-way conferences with parents, teachers and students.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- Work with team (Grade 1 teacher, student services teacher, principal) to develop intervention plans for students identified at risk as a result of the Grade 1 literacy rubric assessment.
- Put in place additional supports through implementation plan.
- Administer STAR Early Literacy test for a second time.
- Prepare second reporting period.
- Hold second set of three-way conferences with parents, teachers and students.

JANUARY/MARCH

- Assess all students using the Grade 1 data collection tool and Grade 1 literacy rubric.

APRIL

- Hold Division K-3 Reading Initiative meeting.

MAY/JUNE

- Administer STAR Early Literacy test for the third time.
- Hold transition meetings with Grade 2 teachers.
- Conduct Canadian Achievement Tests 3rd edition (CAT 3) testing (Canadian Test Centre, 2000) .

GRADE 2

Grade 2 teachers began to develop the timeline, rubrics and data collection tools using the same process as kindergarten and Grade 1. Teachers collectively agreed upon the objectives to test students in co-operation with the Grade 3 teachers. They set about the task of developing an assessment rubric and developing data collection tools for the project. With the experience of their colleagues before them, the teachers systematically set about their work.

Unique to the Grade 2 teachers' process was that they used the Grade 1 objectives and rating scale as a guide to develop their own assessments. They had the results from the previous years to begin to support at-risk students at the beginning of the year. Portfolios were developed for each student to collect their K-3 reading rubrics and results in order to use that data to provide interventions early in Grade 2.

TABLE 4. K-3 READING INITIATIVE GRADE 2 RUBRIC

Grade 2 Literacy Skills Rubric

Name of Student: _____

yellow highlighter-Term 1

pink highlighter-Term 2

blue highlighter-Term 3

OBJECTIVES	RATING SCALE			
	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
1a. Reads aloud with fluency	Generally reads word by word at a slow pace with frequent hesitations	Generally reads 2-3 word phrases at an inconsistent pace with some hesitations	Generally reads with proper phrasing, at a conversational pace with few hesitations	Generally reads higher level texts with proper phrasing at a conversational pace with few hesitations
1b. Reads aloud with accuracy	Below 50% word recognition at grade level	50%-95% word recognition at grade level	95%-100% word recognition at grade level	95%-100% word recognition above grade level
1c. Reads aloud with expression	Reads individual words with inappropriate volume for the passage	Reads with inconsistent phrasing and volume appropriate to the passage	Reads with natural language and volume appropriate to the passage	Reads with language and volume appropriate to their individual interpretation of the passage that brings the passage to life with voice and animation
1d. Reads orally with comprehension	Answers questions at a frustration level (6 or less correct)	Answers questions at an instructional level (7-8 questions correct)	Answers questions at an independent level (9-10 questions correct)	Reads passage at a higher grade level and can answer questions at an instructional level
2. Uses cueing systems to construct meaning	Complete CLOZE at grade level with 60% accuracy	Complete CLOZE at grade level with 70% accuracy	Complete CLOZE at grade level with 80% accuracy	Complete CLOZE at grade level with 90% accuracy
3. Retells story in own words including setting, characters and important events	Retells story in own words with prompting for setting, characters and important events	Retells story in own words omitting one or more of setting, characters and important events	Retells story in own words including setting, characters and important events	Retells story in own words including setting, characters and important events as well as the problem and the solution
4. Uses a variety of reading strategies	Uses one of the five reading strategies	Uses two of the five reading strategies	Uses three of the five reading strategies	Uses four or more of the five reading strategies
5a. Identifies similarities and differences in fiction	Can answer questions about stories with 60% accuracy	Can answer questions about stories with 70% accuracy	Can answer questions about stories with 80% accuracy	Can answer questions about stories with 90% accuracy
5b. Identifies similarities and differences in non-fiction texts	Can answer questions about non-fiction texts with 50% accuracy	Can answer questions about non-fiction texts with 60% accuracy	Can answer questions about non-fiction texts with 70% accuracy	Can answer questions about non-fiction texts with 80% accuracy
6. Reads silently with comprehension	Answers questions at a frustration level (6 or less correct)	Answers questions at an instructional level (7-8 questions correct)	Answers questions at an independent level (9-10 questions correct)	Reads passage at a higher grade level and can answer questions at an instructional level
7. Reads and follows directions	Can read and follow 1-step directions	Can read and follow 2-step directions	Can read and follow 3-step directions	Can read and follow more than 3-step directions

After the first year of data collection, the Grade 2 teachers found that one of their data collection tools was not providing them with the data they needed to use the rubrics and to properly assess student achievement. Even though consistency was important, it was decided that supporting student progress and effective data collection was key to the success of the project, so the tool was changed after the first year.

The Grade 2 timeline is as follows:

SEPTEMBER

- Review CAT3 with Grade 1 teacher.
- Use STAR reading results to record students and begin Accelerated Reader.

OCTOBER

- Work with team (principal, student services teacher and Grade 2 teachers) to develop an intervention plan and adaptations skills list for students who are identified at risk as a result of the Grade 1 assessment, CAT 3 and other sources of data.

NOVEMBER

- Assess students using Grade 2 literacy rubrics.
- Administer STAR Reading test.
- Complete first reporting periods and three-way conferencing.

JANUARY

- Reassess intervention plans for at-risk students.
- Complete rubrics.

FEBRUARY/MARCH

- Assess students using Grade 2 literacy rubrics.
- Administer STAR Reading test.

APRIL

- Hold division K-3 Reading Initiative meeting.
- Complete literacy rubrics.

MAY/JUNE

- Assess students using Grade 2 literacy rubrics.
- Administer STAR Reading test.
- Complete final reporting period.
- Hold Grade 1 teachers' transitional meeting.
- Hold Grade 2 teachers' transitional meeting.

GRADE 3

The last group of teachers to implement the initiative was the Grade 3 teachers. The teachers were confident as the process for collaboration, determining objectives, designing the rubric and developing data collection tools had been established. The Grade 4 teachers were involved with developing the objectives for the Grade 3 rubric, even though they would not be part of the data collection process. Teachers collaboratively determined the objectives, and the Grade 3 teachers set their rating scale for each objective.

The Grade 3 timeline is as follows:

SEPTEMBER

- Identify students at risk.

OCTOBER

- Administer CAT 3 test.

NOVEMBER

- Assess students using Grade 3 literacy rubrics.
- Administer STAR Reading test.
- Read the story *Tiger's New Cowboy Boots* (Morck, 1996).
- Incorporate the word list that accompanies this.
- Read the story *The Noise* (Renaissance Learning, 2001).
- Complete the first reporting period and three-way conferencing.

JANUARY

- Reassess intervention plan for at-risk students.

MARCH

- Administer STAR Reading test.
- Complete report cards.

MAY

- Complete *The Lighthouse Dog* (Waterton, 1997) story map.
- Incorporate the word list that accompanies this.
- Complete *The Cricket Song* (Renaissance Learning, 2001).

JUNE

- Administer STAR Reading test.
- Conduct the Initiative Assessment.
- Complete the final reporting period.
- Hold transition meeting.

TABLE 5. K-3 INITIATIVE GRADE 3 RUBRIC

Grade 3 Literacy Rubric

Name of Student: _____

Rating Scale / Objectives	Experiencing Difficulty	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
1. Recognizes fact and opinion	Reads the Identifying Fact and Opinion test and answers questions with less than 70% accuracy	Reads the Identifying Fact and Opinion test and answers questions with 70% accuracy	Reads the Identifying Fact and Opinion test and answers questions with 80% accuracy	Reads the Identifying Fact and Opinion test and answers questions with 90% accuracy	Reads the Identifying Fact and Opinion test and answers questions with 100% accuracy
2. Identifies main idea in fiction texts	Identifies main idea from non-text with less than 70% accuracy	Identifies main idea from non-text with 70%-79% accuracy	Identifies main idea from non-text with 80%-84% accuracy	Identifies main idea from non-text with 85%-89% accuracy	Identifies main idea from non-text with 90%-100% accuracy
3. Recognizes elements and organization of traditional stories	Can complete story maps independently with less than 70% accuracy	Can complete story maps independently with 70%-79% accuracy	Can complete story maps independently with 80%-89% accuracy	Can complete story maps independently with 90%-95% accuracy	Can complete story maps independently with 100% accuracy
4. Masters word attack strategies	Reads word list from Basic Reading Inventory with less than 70% accuracy	Reads word list from Basic Reading Inventory with 70%-79% accuracy	Reads word list from Basic Reading Inventory 80-89% accuracy	Reads word list from Basic Reading Inventory with 90%-95% accuracy	Reads word list from Basic Reading Inventory with 100% accuracy
5. Reads and comprehends grade appropriate text for a purpose	Student reads 6 months below grade level on STAR reading test	Student reads 4 to 5 months below grade level on STAR reading test	Student reads 2 to 3 months below grade level on STAR reading test	Student reads 1 month above and below grade level on STAR reading test	Student reads 2 months above grade level on STAR reading test
6. Reads grade appropriate text orally with fluency, accuracy, and confidence	Student reads story from Basic Reading Inventory at frustration level according to Inventory rating scale	Student reads story from Basic Reading Inventory at instructional to frustration level according to Inventory rating scale	Student reads story from Basic Reading Inventory at instructional level according to Inventory rating scale	Student reads story from Basic Reading Inventory at instructional to independent level according to Inventory rating scale	Student reads story from Basic Reading Inventory at independent level according to Inventory rating scale

Support for the K-3 Reading Initiative

The Holy Family Board of Education provided resources for the initiative and for the intervention plans as they were very committed to this project. Resources were purchased including the *Jolly Phonics Program* for kindergarten to support beginning reading skills. Speech and language pathologist time was increased in all schools in the division to address needs of students identified at risk by supporting communication. Teacher assistants supported students with intervention plans. Rosetta Stone licences allowed technology to support students' language development. Educational psychologists' services were made available. In-class and out-of-class resource teacher time was made available to kindergarten classes. An occupational therapist supported a plan to identify students with eye skills difficulties, and ocular motor screenings were performed to identify at-risk students, which often translated into learning difficulties. Groups of students then received services to address those issues.

Summary of the Goals

The first goal of the project, the development of outcome rubrics as one of the assessment and evaluation practices that is used to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture for each student, was achieved and is included in the appendix.

The second goal focused on excellence and accountability through professional reflection and evaluation. The development and implementation of various assessment methods in a professional learning community supported the necessary review and criticism of these strategies and promoted excellence.

Teachers reported that the initiative provided them with the opportunity to develop powerful professional grade-alike learning communities. It supported discussion that worked to cluster the curriculum objectives and develop common assessments. It helped teachers examine reading skills at their own grade level and allowed them to work with teachers in previous and following grades.

Teachers focused on curriculum objectives and kept student progress in reading at the centre of teacher discussions. Strategies to improve student achievement were the focus of discussions. Supporting students at risk with regular monitoring and intervention plans reinforced achievement for all students.

The formal data collection for the initiative is complete for kindergarten and Grade 1, but teachers have continued with many of the common assessments they developed through the initiative. Kindergarten teachers continue to develop rubrics for their report cards and most recently added a math rubric to support the renewed kindergarten curriculum.

The third goal bridges best practices and intervention from one year to the next to ensure academic success. Communication between grades in developing the objectives of the rubrics supported teachers in clustering the objectives for each grade to support the needs of teachers in the proceeding grade. The transitional meetings created opportunities for teachers to identify strengths and weaknesses for each student according to the objectives and provide plans for intervention across the grades.

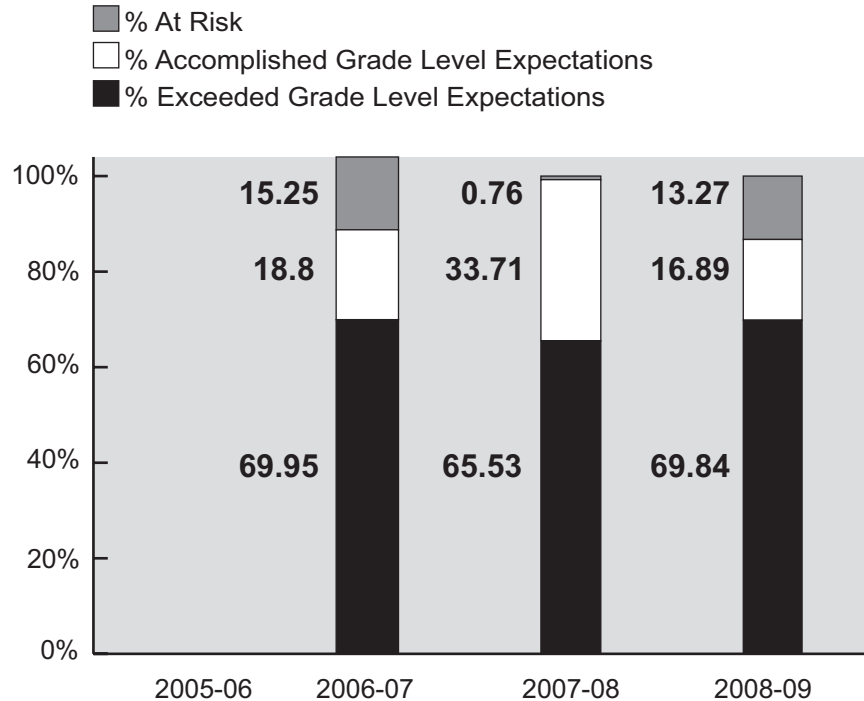
The fourth goal was to create a profile tracking system for all students. Collaboration with members of the educational team, including the previous and proceeding grade teachers, principals, student services teachers and speech pathologists, provided a comprehensive profile for each student. The K-3 profiles for each student allowed teachers to track students across the length of the project.

Conclusion

The road to completion of the K-3 Reading Initiative has been long and winding. Our journey travelled through many stages from its conception, through its processes and, in the end, its benefits to our students and teachers. We have completed the goals of the project and so much more. Programs are now established to support student success. Common assessment is developed and used to track student achievement. Teachers from Holy Family School Division participate in powerful learning communities, data based research, common assessments and an effective tracking and intervention process.

In the end, was it an easy process? No, at times it was very challenging. Did it change teacher practice? Definitely; teachers are ensuring the success for all students through assessment, research, collaboration and best practice.

K-3 Initiative Grade One Results 2006-09



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