

Narrative Comprehension Task

Overview: The Narrative Comprehension Task (NCT) is a technique that is specifically designed to use wordless picture books as assessment tools to measure students' comprehension of narrative texts. However, research has shown how this task can be used as an instructional tool and with expository texts as well.

From Research to Practice:

Pearson, P., & Duke, N. (2002). Comprehension instruction in the primary grades. In C. C. Block & G. M. Pressley (Eds.), *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices* (pp. 247-258). New York: Guilford Press.

Paris, A., & Paris, S. (2003). Assessing narrative comprehension in young children. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(1), 36-76.

Procedures:

1. **Picture Walk:** Give your student a closed picture book and prompt the student to read through the book by focusing on the pictures. Prompt the student to say aloud what they are thinking about the pictures and the story. Teacher uses a checklist to note observations regarding book handling, engagement, individual picture comments, storytelling comments, and comprehension strategies.
2. **Retelling:** After the student has finished the picture walk, prompt the student to retell the story. Teacher uses a checklist to note the student's account of characters, setting, goal/first event, problem, solution, and concluding events/ending.
3. **Prompted Comprehension Questions:** After retelling, the teacher guides students to selected pages to ask 5 literal (explicit) and 5 inferential (implicit) questions. See attached sheet for questions. The student should be prompted to explain answers.
4. **Scoring the assessment:**
 - a. Score each task separately
 - b. Analyze the book handling as emergent skills
 - c. Analyze the recognition of main story elements (character, setting, plot) across all three tasks
 - d. Analyze the storytelling & comprehension of picture walk to determine use of reading strategies
 - e. Analyze explicit implicit questions to see strengths and weaknesses

Retelling Scoring Guide

Element	Student Includes in Retelling (Include notes)
Characters	Adilene acknowledged the three characters, the kid, the grandpa, and the mother. She also acknowledged the two characters that were drawn by the kid and the grandpa. They don't have names but she pointed them out on the page.
Setting	Adilene acknowledges that they are in a house and then they go into a 'new world' through their art.
Initiating Event	The mom drops off the child at his grandpa's house
Problem	They aren't able to talk the same language so they think they don't have a lot in common. The boy is bored.
Solution	The boy starts to draw and the grandpa notices and starts drawing with them. They talk to each other through the drawings. They draw different art and they switch their art. (they have different styles of drawing and they take on each other's style)
Ending	In their drawings, they made a bridge. (I explained to her that this was symbolic) Then the mom was there to pick up the boy and they were sad because they wanted to keep drawing. They hugged before the boy left with his mom.

Prompted Comprehension Questions

Explicit Question	2	1	0
Who are the characters?	Names all main characters	Names most characters	Names only 1 character or NONE
Where does this story happen?	Understands multiple settings	Names only 1 setting	Not appropriate response
Tell what happens at this point [beginning]. Why is this important?	Identifies initiating event and links it with future events	Identifies event does not link to future events	Fails to identify the event
If you were telling someone this story, what would you say is going on now [problem pic]? Why did this happen?	Identifies problem and links it with other events	Identifies event does not link to future events	Fails to identify the problem
What happened here [solution]? Why does this happen?	Identifies outcome and links it with other events	Identifies the event does not link it with other events	Fails to identify the solution
Implicit Questions	2	1	0
Tell what the people are feeling in this picture. Why do you think so?	Infers feelings and connects to other events in story	Infers feeling only	Response is inappropriate
Why did the characters do this [picture]?	Infers cause and connects to other events in story	Infers cause only by events on page	Response is inappropriate
What do you think the people would be saying here [pic]? Why?	Infers dialogue and connects to other events in story	Infers dialogue only	Response is inappropriate

This is the last picture in the story. What do you think happens next? Why?	Predicts and supports with examples	Predicts without support	Response is inappropriate
Think about everything you've learned by reading this book. What would you tell your friend to make this not happen? Keep safe? Etc.	Incorporates multiple events to create a theme/ moral/lesson	Uses one event to determine theme/ moral/lesson	Response is inappropriate