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## Assessment Literacy: Implications for the Literacy Professional

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## Introduction

Specialized literacy professionals must become fluent in the use, analysis, and interpretation of assessment information to support children's reading. In this article, we will explore how teachers, who were enrolled in a graduate program to become state-certified specialized literacy professionals, conducted and interpreted the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5; Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). Because this paper focuses on practicing teachers who are becoming specialized literacy professionals, we will use the general term *teachers* in this article to discuss this population of future specialized literacy professionals.

We acknowledge that knowing how to use an assessment tool is not sufficient, and teachers need to remain aware of how these tools position readers as successful or unsuccessful readers. The data that will be presented are from a self-study project that examined how teachers understood the administration procedures of and the interpretation of results from informal reading inventories (IRIs). In learning to become future specialized literacy professionals, teachers learn to use a variety of IRIs to investigate student reading growth. These assessment tools measure student performance and growth on oral reading and retelling tasks and can be used to develop and create instruction to meet readers' individual needs. How teachers understand, interpret, and use these tools is defined as *teacher assessment literacy*. We start with the definition of assessment literacy as teachers' understandings of the skills and knowledge needed to conduct effective educational assessments (Stiggins, 1991), but reserve some space to expand on this definition to relate it specifically to the critical use of reading assessments as an implication of this work.

The 2017 International Literacy Association (ILA) Standards (ILA, 2017) for specialized literacy professionals support the focus on teachers' assessment literacy in reading. *Standard 3:*

*Assessment and Evaluation* suggests that specialized literacy professionals should have deep understandings of the purposes and uses of reading assessments, as well as be able to conduct and interpret informal reading measures, such as IRIs like the QRI-5. Furthermore, specialized literacy professionals ought to know the limitations of reading assessments and how they can inform classroom instruction. Standard 3 connects to assessment literacy in the area of reading since teachers who are more knowledgeable about how to conduct reading assessments are more likely to be able to provide appropriate instruction to meet the needs of their readers and less likely to misidentify struggling readers (Aaron, Joshi, & Quatroche, 2008; Bailey & Drummond, 2006).

### **Teacher Assessment Literacy**

Assessment literacy has been examined in the fields of science and math education at elementary and secondary levels (e.g., Wang, Kao, & Lin, 2010), and there is a growing body of published research that focuses on reading and writing assessments (Zhems-Angell & Iwai, 2016). Researchers have found that teachers' confidence levels in how, why, and when to assess reading through classroom-based assessments increases when they are provided with regular instructional support, assessment training, field-work experience, and reflective practice (Maloch et.al, 2003; Oboler & Gupta, 2010; Zhems-Angell & Iwai, 2016). As Lyons, DeFord, and Pinnell (1993) suggest, "simply 'telling' teachers what to do backfires into rigid prescriptive ways of teaching that counters the flexibly responsive classroom practices that assessing students demands on teachers" (p. 206).

Bailey and Drummond (2006), who studied assessment literacy in reading, have also found that classroom teachers do not always use assessment results in identifying students who may be struggling with reading. This finding has particular implications for teachers who are

becoming specialized literacy professionals. We cannot assume that these teachers have the knowledge to conduct and interpret a variety of specialized reading and writing assessments, like IRIs. In fact, Popham (2018) argues that the majority of educators, ranging from classroom teachers to administrators, do not have sufficient knowledge about how to use assessments and interpret assessment data and results.

In this article, we suggest that the idea of having sufficient knowledge is a complex issue that requires further exploration. Knowledge can be narrowly conceptualized as technical knowledge of how to administer, score, and interpret the results. However, borrowing on the work of Rosenblatt (1969), knowledge can also be expanded to teachers' understandings that any literacy activity, including the assessment of reading, occurs in a context that is influenced by social, cultural and institutional factors.

We argue that future specialized literacy professionals should be knowledgeable in how they understand, conduct, and interpret reading assessments. As Bean and Kern (2018) suggest, the roles of the specialized literacy professionals are becoming more complex. Specialized literacy professionals not only train to become specialized teachers of reading and writing, but also learn how to become mentor-teachers and administrative leaders. Therefore, exploring teachers' assessment literacy is an important element in supporting teachers to become specialized literacy professionals and will aid in developing effective preparation for this group of teachers.

### **Informal Reading Inventories**

In this study, we focused on IRIs as they incorporate a range of techniques frequently used in the assessment of reading, including a record of oral reading and comprehension questions. IRIs tend to play the role of formative assessments but can be also used for summative

purposes (e.g. Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016). A review by Nilsson (2008) of eight IRIs published since 2002 suggest that IRIs, as individually administered diagnostic assessments of reading performances, serve a variety of purposes for the specialized literacy professional. IRIs provide a means to measure word identification through word lists, oral reading behaviors through asking students to orally read leveled passages, and comprehension through retelling checklist and/or comprehension questions. IRIs provide rough measures of reading abilities by allowing the specialized literacy professional to determine whether the leveled passages are at the frustration, instruction, and independent reading levels (Christ & Cramer, 2011). Therefore, IRIs can assist the specialized literacy professional in finding appropriate reading materials and analyzing oral reading behaviors and comprehension to inform appropriate reading instruction to meet readers' needs.

For the purpose of this article, we were particularly interested in how teachers understood and attended to administering and interpreting the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011), a commonly used IRI. Similar to other IRIs, the QRI-5 is composed of word lists and leveled reading passages that may be read orally or silently. Both are used to find a passage at the reader's instructional reading level. The purposes of the word lists are to (1) estimate a starting point for passage administration, (2) estimate automatic word identification, (3) estimate knowledge of letter-sound matchers, and (4) analyze the differences between word identification in isolation and in the context of the reading passages. The reading passages range from pre-primer 1 to high school, and they include concept questions to assess prior knowledge, the analysis of oral reading miscues (if read orally), and the assessment of comprehension through implicit and explicit comprehension questions. Table 1 provides a description of the QRI-5 subcomponents used for the analysis.

The QRI-5 incorporates miscue analysis procedures into its general procedures to analyze readers' miscues. After finding a starting passage, students are asked to orally read the passage as their reading miscues, which may include word substitutions, complex substitutions, omissions, insertions, and transpositions, are recorded. The QRI-5 reports: the Total Number of Miscues, the Number of Meaning Change Miscues, the Accuracy Level, the Acceptability Level, the Total Retell Score, the Comprehension Level, and the Total Passage Level.

In studying the theories that undergird the analysis of oral reading behaviors in the QRI-5, for instance, Harmey and Kabuto (2018) found that the QRI-5 is framed by two theories and conceptual analyses, which cause confusion regarding how to analyze and interpret oral reading behaviors, producing potentially competing profiles of readers. While Leslie and Caldwell (2011) write that the theoretical foundation of the QRI-5 is based on socio-psycholinguistic perspectives (Goodman, 1996; Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005), Nilsson (2009) contends that IRIs, including the QRI-5, are founded on developmental and interactive models of reading. Socio-psycholinguistic theory forefronts the constructive nature of reading, and examines acceptability, or whether miscues are grammatically or semantically acceptable in sentences. Developmental and interactive models of reading focus on accuracy to suggest that automatic and accurate reading leads to comprehension. In sum, the conflating of theoretical perspectives that undergird assessments has led researchers (e.g. Talanquer, Bolger, & Tomanek, 2015) to argue for more detailed examinations of assessments and how teachers understand assessments in effectively preparing teachers to assess readers.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

The aim of this article is to explore how teachers understood the administration and interpretation procedures for the QRI-5. We analyzed 74 completed QRI-5s conducted on 51 K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students. The QRI-5s were administered by teachers who were Master in Science candidates in a graduate literacy program that leads to New York State certification as literacy specialists. All the teachers held Bachelor's degrees and initial certification as classroom teachers, while eight had already earned a Master's degree and were completing the program to receive an advanced certificate issued by the state. The teachers were female; most self-identified as white ( $n = 34$ ). Approximately 50% had less than three years of teaching experience. Twenty-five teachers taught grades three to six, ten taught in a pre-kindergarten setting, and fifteen taught in kindergarten to second grade classrooms. One teacher taught in a special education high school setting.

### **Self-Study Context**

Teachers administered the QRI-5s in their final clinical experience, in which they worked in a one-on-one setting for 1 hour, 15 minutes one day a week with a student from kindergarten to the sixth grade. The clinical experience took place in either a supervised- university or -public school setting. The K-6<sup>th</sup> grade students represented a range in socioeconomic statuses. Students who attended the university clinical setting tended to come from middle to upper socioeconomic families, with an income range from \$50,000 above. The majority of students from the supervised public school setting came from low to middle socioeconomic families whose household incomes range from less than \$25,000 to \$50,000. Regardless of the clinical setting, the majority of the students spoke English-only in the home and represented diverse racial backgrounds: one-fourth were Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White.

Teachers were expected to complete their assessments within two weeks of their final clinical experience so that they could develop instruction for their students. In addition to the QRI-5, teachers were taught how to administer and incorporate a variety of formative, such as interviews and interest/reading and writing inventories, and norm-referenced assessments, including the Test of Early Written Language-3 (Hresko, Herron, Peak, & Hicks, 2012) and the Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised 3rd Edition (SORT-R3) (Slosson & Nicholson, 2002), in order to examine how assessments may create complementary or competing profiles of readers and writers.

Prior to the final clinical experience, teachers received instruction regarding the QRI-5 and miscue analysis coding, documentation, and analytic procedures. The teachers in the study took two courses on assessment and instruction, and we (the authors) taught the assessment and instruction courses that included the QRI-5 and supervised the students during their clinical experience. The QRI-5 was the focus of the first assessment and instruction course which focused on authentic assessment and aligned with the ILA standards in that students were expected to (a) plan and evaluate learning for diverse learners and (b) create supportive literacy environments that revalue readers and writers. Teachers conducted a case study of one pupil and collected data via the QRI-5, in addition to other assessment and background information. As part of the second assessment course, teachers were instructed in general miscue analysis procedures (Goodman et al., 2005) with similar opportunities for instructional feedback.

In spite of having taken two assessment and instruction courses, we found a number of misconceptions regarding the administration and interpretation of the results for the QRI-5, particularly to improve the preparation of specialized literacy professionals in the assessment of reading. We conducted a self-study involving the two assessment courses as part of the



program's clinical experience to further explore the quality of instruction received by the candidates. The findings, in turn, played a formative role in improving the instruction for future teacher candidates in the program. Once misconceptions were identified, modified instruction aimed at addressing these misconceptions could be implemented in the assessment courses. This self-study was not designed to be generalizable to all populations of teachers or to initially judge the quality of instruction that the candidates received, although the latter became an end goal of the project.

Second, the importance of this self-study project relates to how teachers used the QRI-5 as a starting point to gauge their students' reading performances during the final clinical experience. Inaccuracies in the administration of and the interpretation of the results for the QRI-5 would have negative ramifications because teachers were attempting to gather quality reading materials and develop reading instruction for their students.

### **Research Procedures**

To further investigate how the teachers understood and conducted the QRI-5, as well as how their understandings aligned with the theoretical presentation in the QRI-5, we conducted two analyses. First, we examined the agreement between how the teachers scored the QRI-5 and how we rescored their QRI-5 records based on the QRI-5 administration and interpretation instructions. This analysis allowed us to examine teachers' technical understandings of the QRI-5, i.e. the marking of miscues, the analysis of the miscues, or the administration of the comprehension task. Second, we conducted an analysis to pinpoint the nature of the misconceptions by analyzing, what we defined as errors on the teacher candidates' QRI-5 forms. This analysis involved a content coding procedure. First, the errors were listed, then coded based on the type of error. Examples of errors include inaccurately counting the total number of

miscues, marking repeated miscues each time they occurred, incorrectly selecting the accuracy level of the passage. Second, the errors were coded on whether or not they made a difference in how teachers identified the passages as independent, instructional, or frustration based on the QRI-5 directions. While impactful errors (e.g. miscounting the total number of comprehension questions answered correctly) made a difference on the final passage level, non-impactful errors (e.g. marking the wrong type of miscue, for instance, a substitution for an omission) did not influence the passage level based on the QRI-5 directions. This analysis also allowed us to examine the subcomponents of the QRI-5 to explicate what components of oral reading behaviors and comprehension the teachers understood, and how this positioned their students' as readers based on the QRI-5 results.

### **Common Misconceptions**

When asked to use the QRI-5 to provide an initial reading assessment of their students, teachers, who were studying to become specialized literacy professionals, had more difficulty in recording and analyzing their students' oral reading behaviors when compared to determining the comprehension. Below, we describe the misconceptions that the teachers had when calculating the accuracy and acceptability levels for the oral reading of the passages, the comprehension, and the overall passage selection. Afterwards, we provide one example from a focal teacher, Alice (all names are pseudonyms), to illustrate the misconceptions found in the scoring of the QRI-5.

### **Documenting Oral Reading Behaviors**

The analysis highlights how teachers made errors in implementing and scoring the QRI-5 that impacted the Total Number of Miscues and Accuracy Level. There were two misconceptions that impacted these two areas in the QRI-5.

**Definition and concept of a miscue.** Teachers did not always demonstrate an understanding of the definition and concept of a miscue based on the QRI-5 directions and may have used other conceptual models to define the concept of a miscue. While the QRI-5 describes how to identify miscues, teachers did not always use this definition to score the QRI-5. First, according to QRI-5 procedures, self-corrections are considered miscues. In spite of this, some teachers did not mark self-corrections as miscues. Second, other teachers counted repeated miscues each time they occurred, regardless of whether the miscues changed the meaning of the passage (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). Finally, teachers may have counted repeated miscues for names more than once. According to QRI-5 procedures, teachers should count repeated miscues for names once, as long as the reader is consistent in name substitution.

Some of these misconceptions may have been influenced by other oral reading procedures, such as those that guide running records. Running Records, devised by Clay (2016) is a commonly used tool used to record oral reading behaviors (see Harmey & Kabuto, 2018). When counting the number of errors in a running record, for instance, general procedures do not consider self-corrections as an error. Teachers may have conflated the two procedures to disregard self-corrections as miscues when counting the total number of miscues. Either over-reporting or under-reporting the number of miscues would impact the Accuracy Level. As we will discuss later, the misreporting for the Accuracy Level may cause teachers to misidentify the Total Passage Level.

**Understanding the concept of a meaning change miscue.** The second misconception relates to teachers having a difficult time judging and counting meaning change miscues. Meaning change miscues are treated differently than miscues within the QRI-5 scoring procedures. The analysis suggest that teachers did not always have a clear understanding of

semantic and syntactic acceptabilities and what they mean in terms of defining a miscue as changing the meaning of the sentence or story. Meaning change miscues lack semantic and/or syntactic acceptability at the sentence level. For instance, while a self-correction is counted as a miscue, it is not counted as a meaning change miscue, according to the QRI-5. In addition to lacking clarity on how to judge meaning change miscues, teachers were more likely to provide incomplete data for the acceptability data than for accuracy data. Incomplete data for acceptability occurred in 37 out of the 74 QRI-5s analyzed. The QRI-5 passage levels are determined by the Accuracy Level and Comprehension Level. Based on the QRI-5 procedures, the Acceptability Level does not play a role in determining passage levels. As such, we can conjecture that teachers did not provide the data because they may have felt that they did not need it.

### **Comprehension**

The analysis indicates that teachers were less likely to make errors when conducting and scoring comprehension. The QRI-5 measures comprehension by asking readers five to eight implicit and explicit comprehension questions. Pre-primer passages have five explicit questions. Primer to first-grade passages have four explicit and two implicit questions, and passages at the second-grade level and above have four explicit and four implicit questions. Each question provides acceptable responses, and teachers are asked to document the responses. Afterward, teachers count the answers as either right or wrong. These procedures allow little room for error. When teachers did make errors, they did not count the number of questions answered correctly to generate accurate retell scores. This error occurred in seven out of the 74 QRI-5s.

Because the teachers made fewer errors that impacted the Comprehension Level, teachers were more likely to find the expected Passage Level (i.e. independent, instructional, and

frustration) for the reader. When teachers made errors on the Passage Level, these errors were caused by an inaccurate Accuracy Level. If the Accuracy Level is at the frustration level, it places the entire passage at the frustration level regardless of the Comprehension Level. Therefore, if a teacher mistakenly over-reported the total number of miscues that a reader made and placed the Total Accuracy Level at the frustration level, the teacher would have misidentified the entire passage level at the frustration level, when in fact, it could be at the instructional or independent levels.

### **An Example from a Focal Teacher**

Here, we present a QRI-5 administration and interpretation record from a teacher, Alice (Table 2). Alice's administration and interpretation of her student's QRI-5 record illustrate the common technical misconceptions that teachers demonstrated with the QRI-5. During the time of her clinical experience, Alice, who is certified as a classroom and special education teacher, was a pre-kindergarten teacher in a public pre-school setting that had a large bilingual Spanish and English population, located in a large urban school district. Alice participated in the clinical setting housed in the public school located in the same school system within which she was employed. Prior to becoming a pre-kindergarten teacher, Alice was a teacher assistant in a suburban setting.

For this QRI-5 record, Alice administered the level one passage *Marva Finds a Friend*, a passage about a young girl, Marva, who finds a stray cat, to her student, Katie. Katie is an African-American, 8-year-old student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Katie's family is low socio-economic status, and she lives with her mother, who has a high school degree. Katie speaks English in the home and was selected to participate in the clinical experience by her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, who

identified her as a student needing additional support in reading and writing. Katie's mother reported a high level of engagement in working with Katie in reading and writing in the home.

Based on Katie's record, Alice determined that Katie read the level one passage at the instructional level. Alice noted that Katie made eleven miscues, although Katie made 17 miscues (Table 2). She did not count self-corrected miscues as miscues when calculating the Total Number of Miscues, which caused her to under-report the number of miscues. For instance, Katie read the sentence, "The girl took Boots in her arms" as "The *cat (self-corrected) girl* took Boots in her arms." While Alice did not count the substitution and self-correction as a miscue, it should have been counted as such according to the QRI-5 scoring procedures. There were three other instances of this error in Alice's QRI-5 scoring. While Alice reported an incorrect number for the Total Number of Miscues, she accurately calculated the Accuracy Level as being at the instruction level because of the range for the number of miscues. There is a difference of 20 miscues between the instruction and independent levels.

Alice reported six meaning change miscues, even though Katie made five while reading *Marva Finds a Friend*. The difference between the reported number and the expected number for Meaning Change Miscues was one, which did not impact the Acceptability Level of the passage. It is worth noting that the Accuracy Level allows for a larger range of miscues than the Acceptability Level. For this passage, in terms of its acceptability level, the independent level ranges from zero to six miscues, the instructional level ranges from seven to 14 miscues, and the frustration level includes totals over 15 miscues.

Alice reported the expected Comprehension Level and the Total Passage Level. The Passage Level is determined by the Comprehension Level. Because she found the

Comprehension Level to be at the instructional level for the level one passage, she concluded that the Total Passage Level was also at the instructional level.

Not only does Alice's QRI-5 record illustrate common misconceptions made by other teachers in documenting and analyzing their students' oral reading behaviors, it also considers how the structure of the QRI-5 masks these misconceptions. In spite of Alice making errors regarding the reader's oral reading performance, she was still able to determine the expected passage level due to the range of the number of miscues for the various accuracy levels. Furthermore, the comprehension component is represented by 'right' or 'wrong' answers, regarding which there is little room for mistakes.

Alice's record also suggests that analyzing readers' oral reading through an accuracy perspective, rather than an acceptability perspective, can change how one views a reader's oral reading performance (Harmey & Kabuto, 2018). By considering oral reading accuracy in determining the Passage Level, the QRI-5 uses the correctness of the reader's produced response rather than whether the produced response makes sense and is grammatically acceptable in the sentence.

Katie read at the instructional level based on accuracy, but if we consider acceptability, she would be considered as reading at the independent level.

Second, self-corrections are counted as miscues and impact the Accuracy Level in the QRI-5. Therefore, because Alice's reader made four self-corrections, the Total Number of Miscues was increased by four. Self-corrections, however, do not count as meaning change miscues. Thus, the Number of Meaning Change Miscues decreases by four. A reader who makes a large number of self-corrections will have a lower Accuracy Level as compared to their Acceptability Level. Leslie and Caldwell acknowledge that counting self-corrections as miscues

may be problematic, and state that teachers and specialists may use the Acceptability Level in determining the passage level.

### **Implications for the Specialized Literacy Professional**

In this article, we began with the general definition of teacher assessment literacy as the skills and knowledge needed to conduct effective educational assessments to examine teacher-candidates' understandings of how to conduct the informal reading inventory, the QRI-5. We found that our teachers could, for the most part, conduct the QRI-5. They followed the QRI-5 directions and, overall, came to the expected Passage Level for their students, as demonstrated by the focal example presented. If we were to only look at whether or not the teachers were technically knowledgeable, we would miss how teacher assessment literacy can encompass a critical stance in the practice of assessing. Based on our findings and using the *Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation* from the 2017 ILA Standards for specialized reading professionals, we argue that assessment literacy in the area of reading can be seen as more than a set of skills or acquired knowledge.

In summarizing the findings as part of the self-study, we found that teachers did not always critically evaluate the assessment results in relation to their students' educational histories. In the focal example, Katie, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student of color from a low socio-economic household, was recommended to participate in the clinical experience because her teacher identified her as a student who was in need of reading and writing support. As noted earlier, teachers in the clinical setting worked with students who represented a range in socioeconomic statuses and racial and linguistic backgrounds. Yet, these aspects sat in the fringes of the teachers' assessment practices with the QRI-5. In reviewing the content within the clinical



experiences that we provided our teachers, we acknowledge this area needs to be further developed to better prepare our teachers to become specialized literacy professionals.

Bailey and Drummond (2006) explain that broadening “teachers’ repertoire of assessments” is needed to improve teacher decision-making on reading outcomes to meet the needs of diverse student populations (p. 174). The implications of this study support this notion and the work of researchers who argue for culturally relevant ways to assess the diverse population of students in classrooms (Kabuto, 2017; Briceño & Klein, 2019; Gay, 2010). In particular, there is an increasing amount of research on using the IRIs with bilingual students. Ascenzi-Moreno (2016) suggested that IRIs are limited in how they assess for cultural and linguistic diversity. This argument has led researchers, like Kabuto (2017), to find ways to balance other assessments with the QRI-5 to create reading profiles as a culturally relevant assessment practice.

Furthermore, teachers in this study did not critically consider the theoretical and conceptual models that framed the QRI-5 and how these models may have positioned their students as reading on-, at-, or above- grade level. Understanding models of reading could impact how developing specialized literacy professionals interpret assessment results and define their readers as successful or not successful. Based on Katie’s QRI-5 record, for instance, we can conclude that Katie is possibly a “below-grade level reader,” which supports her classroom teacher’s assessment of her. There is, however, another way to interpret Katie’s record: Katie could have possibly read above the level one passage because she read it at the independent level based on her Total Acceptability. Based on the data that we have presented, we will never know if Katie could have, in fact, read a passage at a higher level. Not only did the assessment define

Katie as a level one instructional reader based on the Total Passage Level (Table 2), Alice also decided to stop the assessment when she found the level one passage at the instructional level.

While we studied the scoring and interpretation of the QRI-5, Leslie and Caldwell (2017) published a new version, the QRI-6, which contains differences from the QRI-5 that impact the determination of the passage level. A major difference is counting a self-correction as a miscue in the QRI-5 to not counting it as a miscue in the QRI-6 for the Accuracy Level. As illustrated by Katie's QRI-5 record, Katie's final Accuracy Level would be at the independent level if using the revised QRI-6 scoring guidelines.

If IRIs are considered to be formative assessments and the results are used as a “data-rich resource on which to base instructional decisions” (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2016, p. 17), the conceptual shift in defining a miscue could result in a different type of instruction for a student like Katie. It is, therefore, important for specialized literacy professional to understand these types of theoretical and conceptual shifts and revisions, as they can impact how we define a reader's reading ability. This point has implications for how teachers can be better supported as assessment experts through differentiating between *professional development* and *teacher training*. While training focuses on the how-to of conducting assessments, professional development for specialized literacy professionals ought to support them in developing clearly conceptualized models of learning that lead to developing effective assessment practices around reading.

Redefining assessment literacy in reading, thus, requires two interrelated foci. First, the improvement of assessment literacy in reading requires evaluating the process by which future specialized literacy professionals conduct assessments. As university-based educators who prepare teachers to become specialized literacy professionals, the findings of this study and QRI-

5 records, like Katie's, made us critically reflect on how we may have privileged certain types of reading assessments and how we mentor and support teachers in our program through the revision of curricular content and instruction.

Second, developing assessment literacy in reading for future specialized literacy professionals should incorporate the study and analysis of the assessments or tests. We do not argue that there has been tremendous focus on analyzing factors like reliability, validity, and fairness of educational assessments (Afflerbach, 2018; Popham, 2018). We do argue, however, that there is a lack of focus on studying the underlying theories or perspectives, metatheories, that frame the assessments (Harmey & Kabuto, 2018). Literacy professionals are expected to have specialized knowledge on how to assess students' oral reading behaviors and comprehension and included in this specialized knowledge is the ability to understand how assessments and test are informed by theories of language and literacy.

### **Conclusion**

With the dominance of commercialized and published assessment materials for reading being used in schools, we argue that assessment literacy should include a critical lens so that future specialized reading professionals not to be just consumers of assessments. Along with other researchers (e.g. Talanquer, Bolger, & Tomanek, 2015), we contend that specialized literacy professionals require guidance and support in developing their assessment literacy by conducting more detailed examinations of assessments and critically questioning how assessments are theoretically and conceptually framed.

There are limitations to the work that we have presented in this article. First, we studied teachers' understandings of one particular IRI, which is only one aspect of their assessment literacy. The teachers who were studied conducted other types of assessments. Studying the

broader landscape of how teachers balanced other types of assessments with the results of their QRI-5 records could further enhance our understandings of developing teachers' assessment literacy in reading. Due to space limitations, we were unable to provide information on teachers' reflections on their comfort levels with administering the QRI-5 to their students, and how they used the QRI-5, in combination with other assessments, to create instruction for their students.

In spite of these limitations, we suggest that developing specialized literacy professionals should consider the multidimensional, dynamic, and, sometimes, conflicting ways assessments construct notions of readers' reading performances, as well as how the process of assessment is mediated by assessment kits, procedures, and discourses used to make educational decisions around reading. Wixon (2017) explicates this point by writing, "It is incumbent upon the consumers of these tests to understand exactly what each of these assessments is measuring and the roles of reader, text, and task factors in student performance" (p. 79). To better understand "what" the assessments measure, we suggest that specialized literacy professional employ critical literacy perspectives to the process of assessing students to deconstruct the theories and perspectives that undergird assessments or tests, in connection to, but also beyond notions of reliability, validity, and fairness.

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Table 1

*Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 Section Descriptions*

QRI-5 Sections	Description
Total Number of Miscues	Represents the types of miscues, which include insertion, omission, substitutions, reversals, and self-correction, that the students make on the examiner's copy. Any miscues that <u>change</u> the meaning of the text should be marked with an "MC."
Number of Meaning Change Miscues	Represents the types of miscues, which include insertions, omissions, substitutions, reversals, and self-corrections, that affect the meaning. These miscues are represented an "MC."
Accuracy Level	Represents the oral reading level, frustration, instructional, and independent, based on the total number of miscues.
Acceptability Level	Represents the oral reading level--frustration, instructional, and independent--based on the total number of acceptable miscues.
Total Retell Score	Represents the total number of retell questions answered correctly. Passage have eight retell questions.
Comprehension Level	Represents the comprehension level--frustration, instructional, and independent--based on the total number of comprehension questions answered correctly.
Total Passage Level	Represents the passage level--frustration, instructional, and independent--based on the Accuracy Level (frustration, instructional, and independent) and Comprehension Level (frustration, instructional, and independent).



Table 2

*Comparison of Teacher Scores (Alice) and Master Scores (Authors)*

Student Information	8-year-old	
QRI-5 Section	Marva Finds a Friend Level One	
	Alice (Teacher Candidate)	Authors
Total Number of Miscues	11	17
Number of Meaning Change Miscues	6	5
Accuracy Level	Instr	Instr
Acceptability Level	Indep	Indep
Total Retell Score	4	4
Comprehension Level	Instr	Instr
Total Passage Level	Instr	Instr

Note: *INC* indicates incomplete data. *Indep* indicates independent, *Instr* indicates instructional, and *Frust* indicates frustration levels.