

**Overview of the
Process Assessment of the Learner-
Second Edition:
Tiered Assessment and Intervention**

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Agenda

- describe the PAL-II assessment systems.
- describe how the components of the PAL-II are used to
 - prevent academic problems;
 - identify targeted interventions for struggling students; and
 - make differential diagnoses.

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Source of Information

Work of Dr. Virginia Berninger, author of the *Process Assessment of the Learner-Second Edition: Diagnostic Assessment for Reading, Writing, and Math*.

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What is PAL-II?

- *PAL-II Reading and Writing* and *PAL-II Math* are comprehensive, research-based assessment systems.
- The instruments can be used at three tiers ranging from prevention to problem-solving consultation to differential diagnosis.
- *PAL-II Reading and Writing* links to targeted evidence-based interventions and lessons.

The Three Tier Model

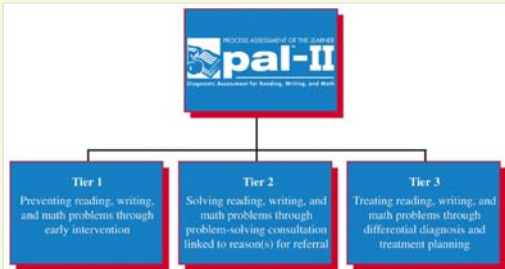


Figure 1 The Three Tier Model



Preventing Reading, Writing, and Math Problems Tier 1: Early Intervention

Tier 1 Lesson Set 1

Beginning Reading 1

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Subword Level

Target Skill	Letter(s) - phoneme correspondences in alphabetic principle (spelling to phoneme direction)
Materials	<i>Talking Letters Student Desk Guide</i>
Estimated Time	10 minutes

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 1

Beginning Reading 1

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Word Level

Target Skill	Application of alphabetic principle to monosyllabic word reading
Materials	<i>Teacher-constructed word card deck (from Lists 1 and 2)</i>
Estimated Time	10 minutes

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 1

Beginning Reading 1

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Text Level

Target Skill	Story Reading: oral reading and reading for personal meaning
Materials	<i>Beginning paperback books</i>
Estimated Time	10 minutes

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 1

Beginning Reading 1

Progress Monitoring

- Lists 3 and 4, Transfer words (in the Reproducible Instructional Materials).
- Growth Graph 1 (in the Reproducible Instructional Materials).
- Attention/Motivation Ratings (in the Reproducible Instructional Materials).

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 3

Handwriting Legibility and Automaticity

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Subword Level

Target Skill Writing each of 26 letters once, using numbered arrow cues, across sessions that increase time delay for writing letters from memory

Materials *PAL Handwriting Lessons and pencils without eraser*

Estimated Time 10 minutes

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 3

Handwriting Legibility and Automaticity

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Word Level

Target Skill Using letters to write words

Materials Set of 3 words (provided in the daily lesson plans) and pencils without erasers

Estimated Time 5 minutes or less

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Tier 1 Lesson Set 3

Handwriting Legibility and Automaticity

Schema for Lesson Set 1, Tier 1

Text Level

Target Skill	Composing for 5 minutes in teacher-provided topics and sharing compositions with classmates
Materials	Grade-appropriate lined paper, pencils without erasers, and PAL composing topics
Estimated Time	5 minutes to compose, and, depending on size of group, 5-10 minutes for sharing

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Numeral Writing

First, give the child models with numbered arrows that show how to form the numeral

- which strokes to make, and
- in what order to make them.

Second, when the child can form each of the 10 numerals legibly, move to activities that develop automatic numeral writing.


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Numeral Writing

Third, ask child to write each of the 10 numerals (in a random numeric order) from dictation.

Fourth, ask the child to write the numeral(s) that come before and after other numerals.

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**Solving Reading, Writing,
and Math Problems**

Tier 2: Problem-Solving Consultation Linked
to Reason for Referral

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**Responding to Referral for
Reading Problem**

1. Interview referring teacher.
2. Observe the child during reading instruction.
3. Administer standardized, normed subtests to identify the nature of the reading problem.
4. Administer process measures for deficient reading skills.

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**Responding to Referral for
Reading Problem**

5. Meet with the teacher again to clarify the nature of the problem based on a synthesis of the interview, classroom observations, and formal testing.
6. Schedule follow-up meeting at a time designated in the progress-monitoring plan.

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Results	
	Scaled Score
Pseudoword Decoding	5
Phonological awareness	
✓ Syllables	6
✓ Phonemes	8
Orthographic awareness	
✓ Receptive Coding	8


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Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve phonological awareness - focus on syllables<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ find a word hidden in a longer word✓ say the syllable missing from a word he'd heard✓ say a word without a part of the word✓ say a new word by substituting a given syllable for another• Small Group (3 students)• Reading specialist• 30 minutes each day• Monitor progress - assess 2x month• Review in eight weeks	

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Change Intervention	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explicit instruction in translating printed words to spoken words• Individual• Reading specialist• 30 minutes each day• Monitor progress - assess 2x month• Review in eight weeks	

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**Treating Reading, Writing,
and Math Problems**

Tier 3: Differential Diagnosis and
Treatment Planning

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Referral Questions

- Does the student's performance meet diagnostic criteria for a written language learning disability?
- What can teachers do to improve student's achievement in reading and spelling?

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**Language is Oral and Written,
Receptive and Expressive**

Oral Language = Listening Comprehension + Oral Expression	Written Language = Reading Comprehension + Written Expression
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What do we know about Written Language Problems?

There are three kinds of specific learning disabilities that affect written language.

- One of these is Dyslexia, or a Specific Reading Disability.
- The other two are Oral/Written Language LD and Dysgraphia.

Not all Reading Problems are Dyslexia (Berninger, 2006)

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability affecting accuracy and rate of reading real words, phonological decoding, oral reading of passages, and written spelling.
- Except for phonological processing, oral language skills are spared and comprehension is good.

Not all Reading Problems are Dyslexia (Berninger, 2006)

In oral and written language learning disability (OWL LD), oral language skills, including comprehension, are impaired in addition to the same skills that are impaired in dyslexia.

Not all Reading Problems are Dyslexia
(Berninger, 2006)

Dysgraphia is a specific learning disability that impairs legibility and automaticity of handwriting and/or written spelling.

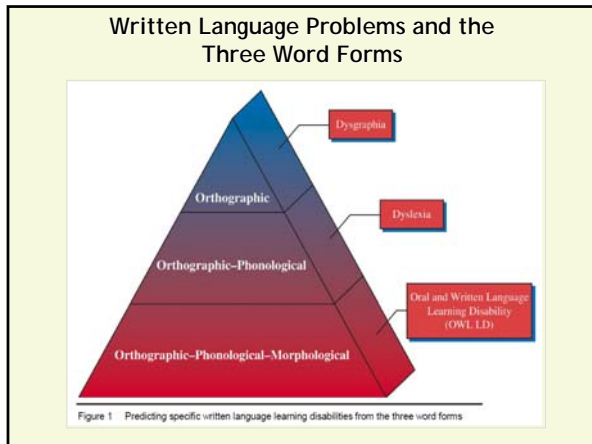
Differential Diagnosis

Are the student's reading difficulties symptoms of

- a Specific Reading Disability (Dyslexia), and/or
- an Oral and Written Language Learning Disability, and/or
- Dysgraphia.

Differential Diagnosis Related to Coding of Three Word Forms

One research finding is that the nature of the specific written-language deficit is related to the coding operation (storage and processing of phonological, orthographic, and morphological word forms) that is impaired.



Importance of Research Supported Diagnosis

Research supported diagnosis is important because there are instructional implications.

- Students with dyslexia need more systematic and explicit instruction in word decoding than do grade peers.
- Once they learn to decode, their reading comprehension typically develops normally.

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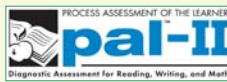
Importance of Research Supported Diagnosis

- See *Instructional Implications* in *Dyslexics Can Learn How to Read and Write and Teachers can Teach Them*, PAL-II User's Guide.
- See Tier 3 Lesson Sets in Berninger, V., & Abbott, S. *Research-Based Reading and Writing Lessons*, PAL-II User's Guide.

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Importance of Research Supported Diagnosis

- Students with a language learning disability need systematic and explicit instruction in oral language (morphological and syntactic awareness) *and* in reading comprehension and decoding.
- Students with dysgraphia need systematic, explicit (not incidental) handwriting and spelling instruction.



Differential Diagnosis: Dyscalculia

Disorder of
Math Calculation Skills

Dyscalculia - SLD Math

- Disorder of math calculation skills.
- It is also a working memory disorder.

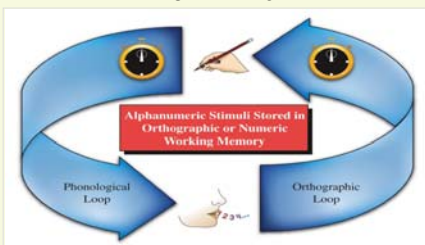


Figure 4 Numeric coding and orthographic loop in working memory supporting math

Referral Concerns

- Weakness with mental calculation in working memory.
- Difficulty with paper-and-pencil calculation.

Many Processes can Affect Written Calculation

- Counting fluency.
- Quantitative working memory.
- Numeric coding in working memory of visual symbols for numerals.
- Numeral writing.
- Phonological and orthographic loops in working memory.
- Oral and written fluency in retrieving math facts from memory.

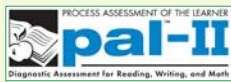
If Fact Retrieval is Impaired . . .

- If student struggles to switch attention from one operation to another (+, -, x), teach student to name the operation.
- Use multi-modal teaching for automaticity.
- Use selective reminding.

References

Berninger, V. (2007). Dyslexics Can Learn How to Read and Write and Teachers Can Teach Them. In *PAL-II User's Guide*. Pearson.

Berninger, V. (2007). *PAL-II User's Guide*. Pearson.



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