

CASE STUDY: Scantron Partnership With The Lexile Framework for Reading Provides Teachers, Parents With an Assessment Tool for Improving Student Reading Ability



Lexile: Matching readers to text

In the competitive testing and assessment world, schools and districts are constantly on the lookout for new solutions from developers of educational technology. In response, Scantron, an Irvine, Calif.-based data collection and assessment company, has linked The Lexile Framework® for Reading to its popular Performance Series assessment solution.

Performance Series is a standards-based, computer-adaptive test that educators use as a diagnostic for student placement, and for progress reporting. By administering a reliable and valid standards-based test that adapts automatically to each student's individual level—and reports results instantaneously—educators gain clear snapshots of students' performance across a range of subjects. Immediate reporting saves teachers time and frustration, as individual students and classes can get started in the right direction the first week of school.

“On a traditional fixed-form test, a percentage of students can't perform at their grade level, yet there's limited information about where they truly are and how to adjust the curriculum,” said Eric Rohy, vice president, product management, Scantron. “Performance Series tests identify in which special areas students need more work, and how far away they are from their goal. This is done with the scaled score, an educational yardstick in grades two to 10 of different-level knowledge.” Lexile® measures are reported as part of the reading subject area, together with the test results.

The Lexile Framework provides a common scale for matching reader ability and text difficulty, enabling teachers and parents to choose materials that can help to improve student reading skills and monitor literacy across the curriculum and at home. More than 100,000 books and 80 million articles have Lexile measures, and all major norm-referenced tests can report student reading scores in Lexiles.

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“Parents often ask, ‘What can I do to help my child?’” said Janelle Balazs, a teacher on special assignment for special education in the Perris Union High School District in California, which has used Performance Series for over two years. “Working with students or parents, we use the Lexile measure to find appropriate books from the book list provided on the California Department of Education Web site. Now we can say, ‘Work with your child to read these books.’ The parents' reaction is very positive. It is a powerful tool.”

Commitment to Making Test Scores Actionable

Although it seems an easy step to add Lexiles to Performance Series assessments, Scantron did extensive research to ensure that the assessment scores linked consistently with Lexiles. Richard Brown, Ph.D., director of research, said, “The linking study, involving 1,800 children in grades three, five and seven across the country, allowed us to do effective and precise linking between the Performance Series scale and the Lexile scale. A score per se doesn't mean anything, but it does have meaning if you can relate it to a Lexile measure and come up with a list of recommended books. It makes a test score actionable.”

It was the desire to provide teachers with actionable results that led Scantron to partner with MetaMetrics®, Inc., developer of the Lexile Framework. While Performance Series already provides scores and individualized learning objectives for each student, adding Lexile measures to the report answers the “what's next” question for educators and parents.

“It's the continuation of our strategy to assist the teachers and parents,” said Marjorie Reynolds, product manager. “With these scores, teachers make sure the students are reading where they need to be to ensure optimal growth. It's also an actionable piece of data that schools provide to parents on our student profile report. Parents then have the ability to use the testing data directly to assist their child.”

Making Test Scores Relevant in the Classroom

Feedback from schools and districts substantiates Scantron's efforts to provide useable data that supports instruction. Classroom teachers use Lexiles to set up reading groups based on ability. They use Lexiles to connect students to appropriate

reading materials in the classroom and school libraries. "Because our test is completely online, teachers have the Lexile measure the minute the student completes the test," said Reynolds. "It gives them the ability to group and challenge students appropriately."

Rohy described the combination of Performance Series and Lexiles as a powerful match. "Performance Series alone is reliably accurate in determining the level of a student, and Lexiles are very effective in pointing to what reading material is most appropriate. We determine where they should be, and Lexiles determine student-specific reading material."

As No Child Left Behind continues to emphasize standardized test scores as a measure of achievement, Brown feels strongly that administrators must not lose sight of the fact that each score represents a child with individual needs. "It would be really beneficial for the administrators to understand and appreciate the wide range of reading proficiency of kids in different grade levels," he said. "For instance, second graders read all over the board. Lexiles allow educators to recognize this wide range and get a real understanding of how to help them improve their reading skills."

Reynolds observes that it's the resources provided by MetaMetrics that also set Lexiles apart. Teachers can access the myriad of tools through the Lexile Web site, www.Lexile.com. For example, they can use the Lexile Analyzer® to analyze text, literature or supplementary materials and generate a Lexile measure for the text, or they can search the Lexile Database to find titles that match students' Lexile levels. "After the test is over, here's something to help the students," she said. "There's just a wealth of information there."

Rohy added, "I believe it's crucial for both the district administrators and classroom teachers to understand not only how their students are performing, but what reading material is necessary to take them to the next level. The combination of Performance Series, which adapts to their level of knowledge, and Lexiles provides personalized assessment and personalized instruction."

"The scores we give aren't just a number on a piece of paper, which is so often the comment I hear about assessment scores," said Reynolds. "Because of the resources that are available, instructors can tie these results to actual instruction."

Scantron is a data collection and assessment company based in Irvine, Calif. The company provides partner school districts with a variety of online and Web-based assessment solutions that are keyed to state standards.

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The Lexile Framework® for Reading provides a common scale for matching reader ability and text difficulty, enabling teachers and parents to choose materials that can help to improve student reading skills and monitor literacy across the curriculum and at home. Recognized as the most widely adopted reading measure in use today, Lexiles® are part of reading and testing programs at district, state and federal levels. More than 100,000 books, 80 million articles and 60,000 Web sites have Lexile measures, and all major standardized tests can report student reading scores in Lexiles.

Benefits of Partnering with MetaMetrics

- Provides immediate, actionable data for classroom teachers and parents
- Correlates closely with Performance Series scoring
- Offers customers a comprehensive product that combines assessment, learning objectives and strategies

For more information on Lexiles, contact us at 1-888-LEXILES or visit www.Lexile.com.

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