Readiness Assessment Test: Tracking Comprehension in Independent Reading Assignments

At times, the classroom teacher wishes to monitor whether instructional or intervention strategies to support comprehension are actually resulting in the student retaining more information from assigned readings. Readiness assessment tests (RATs) are a real-time means of measuring whether a student retains essential information from an assigned reading.

RATs are brief teacher-made assignments that students complete *after* they have finished an assigned reading but *before* that reading is reviewed in class (Weinstein & Wu, 2009). RATs allow the instructor to monitor the retention of assigned readings for an individual student or the entire classroom. Here are the steps to creating an RAT:

1. The teacher identifies what information from the assigned reading is most relevant and constructs a small number of questions to test that knowledge.
2. The instructor selects the RAT-question format: short-answer, essay, multiple-choice, or any combination.
3. Finally, the teacher decides on the number of questions to include on the RAT, with 5 being a typical number. Below are sample questions illustrating the various formats:

Multiple Choice: A solar eclipse occurs when:

A. the sun cools and dims.
B. the moon passes between the earth and sun.
C. the earth spins on its access.
D. the earth blocks moonlight.

Short Answer: A solar eclipse occurs when the _____ passes between the _____ and the sun.

Essay: Write a 1-paragraph essay on what causes a solar eclipse.

TIP: If a teacher administers RATs regularly (e.g., weekly), that instructor may want to standardize the format (e.g., 5 items: 3 multiple-choice; 1 short-answer; 1 brief essay) to allow for easier comparison of student performance across multiple assessments.

Scoring RATs. Readiness Assessment Tests are quick to score. Typically, the student's grade on the RAT is calculated as a percentage score:

- First, the number of correct items is divided by the total number of RAT items.
- Then this decimal figure is multiplied by 100 to yield a grade.

For example, a student with 3 correct items out of 5 on an RAT would have a grade of 60% correct (3 divided by 5 = 0.6; 0.6 x 100 = 60 percent correct).

Reference

Weinstein, S. E., & Wu, S. (2009). Readiness assessment tests versus frequent quizzes: Student preferences. *International Journal of Teaching and Learnings in Higher Education, 21*(2), 181-186.