



Assessment

by Sheila Carroll

How will I know if the Living Books Curriculum method of teaching is working? How will I demonstrate to others that learning is taking place? These are important questions.

In most public schools testing is at predetermined times to “measure learning.” This means of assessment tests a child’s recall of facts. That is, the test measures what the child remembers. It also focuses on what the child does not know—not what he or she does know. This kind of testing is useful on a basic level, but it does not measure what the child understands.

A wonderful tool for evaluation of learning is narration. We recommend beginning formal narration at age six. Charlotte Mason felt that a child’s language and thinking skills were not ready for this task until that age. There are many informal means of narration used in the Foundation Year so that when the child begins formal narration (usually in first grade) it is an easy transition. To learn more about narration see the article **Successful Narration**.

For evaluation at the end of the year, children can be asked to narrate specific subject matter in a number of different forms (see the article on narration for suggestions). Of course, for the younger children—kindergarten and first grade—the teaching parent learns a great deal by observation and can ask for narration on such subjects of how to do a certain task or what a certain word means. The length and level of difficulty has to be determined by the teaching parent. By keeping a notebook of narrations by your child you can easily demonstrate to others what your child is learning.

Assessment of Basic Concepts (ABC Test)

Included with the Foundation Year is the Assessment of Basic Concepts (ABC Test). Dr. James Carroll, a specialist in assessment, has created it especially for the Living Books Curriculum. It can be used as a measure of readiness and progress. The test is designed to gently discover the child’s level of understanding of basic concepts and skills necessary for kindergarten. The ABC test measures language, math and conceptual skills. For the test to be a true measure of learning, you will want to test your child at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end.

The ABC test for the Foundation Year is included with the Complete Foundation Year Package. The ABC test also may be purchased separately. To learn more **click here**.