

Relating Words: What it is and what it does.

- Relating Words is a test of vocabulary test that uses a new format to evaluate a student's knowledge of the meanings of words and of how words relate to each other.

- Traditional receptive vocabulary tests, such as the PPVT, use pictures of persons, animals, objects or events to evaluate if a student can identify the picture that best describes a spoken word. Expressive vocabulary tests, such as the EVT, use single pictures to evaluate if a student can say the appropriate name for what is pictured. These tests evaluate what is called *referential word knowledge*. They do not test how a student thinks with words. Their purpose is to find where a student's vocabulary breaks down.

- Relating Words is essentially a vocabulary test that evaluates what a student knows about the meanings associated with already familiar words and how she/he can think with words to make different pairs that go together in logical fashion. It essentially evaluates *semantic flexibility*, or how a student can manipulate words in ways that show logical associations between them.

- Relating Words does not have right or wrong responses for how the given words are paired. Instead word-pairing responses can be more or less logical or common based on how students of his/her age would pair the words. This means that each word pair is given a weighted score that reflects the frequency with which his/her peers find the words to be strongly associated.

- A student's performance on Relating Words reflects how he/she thinks about words and makes associations between them when he/she listens to or reads a story or text. It reflects how actively a student engages in listening or reading to create meanings that go beyond the given words.

- Consider a passive listener or reader. She/he may know the meanings of all the words, but not make any associations that go beyond the concrete referents. In contrast, an active listener or reader creates meanings and associations that go beyond the actual words. These associations make it possible for an active listener or reader to understand and anticipate cause-effect relationships and make inferences or predictions that go beyond the given information, skills that are essential for achievement in literacy.

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