Assess Understanding and Use of Early Vocabulary

Living Language is now out of print but there are several comparable lists of the first words understood and used by young children. The following lists have been taken from several of these lists. Of course, the list is not exhaustive and you will want to add 'personal' words or words that are more appropriate for older pupils.

Ball	Mummy	Mouth	Sweets
Bricks	Daddy	Hair	Cup
Car	Baby	Tummy	Apple
Biscuit	Cat	Shoes	Pencil
Drink	Dinner	Chair	House
Book	Eyes	Coat	Water
Spoon	Feet	Dress	To clap
Juice	Duck	Dog	To drink
Milk	Brush	Doll	To brush
Hat	Nose	Bed	To sit
	Toes	Hands	To cut

Plate	Tree	To cook
Table	Trousers	To stand
Bag	Pram	To throw
Socks	Swing	To walk
Bird	Man	To run
Flower	Box	To hit
To jump	Paper	To push
To sleep	Tap	To dry
To eat	Soap	To kick
To cry	Towel	
To wash	To read	

The test should involve the selection of familiar objects and experiences. You are not attempting to trick the pupils but to find out what they understand.

How will you ensure that the objects and experiences you choose will be familiar to the student? What evidence would you need to have here to ensure that this was the case?

The pupils will need to have certain prerequisite skills - for example, pointing to indicate one object from a selection of objects or being able to respond appropriately to a verbal demand such as 'show me'. Obviously, the type of instruction you select depends very much on the pupils involved.

How can you ensure that you do not provide inappropriate non verbal clues?

Devise appropriate test instructions and be prepared to test knowledge of the words more than once, if you want to avoid chance responses.

Select a way in which the items will be presented. The pupil could be asked to select from a choice of two items, but chance responses will be highly probable. Six items may be too difficult to scan.

You may do the tests in the context of an ordinary learning activity or situation, but do take care to test rigorously. You need to be certain whether the pupil truly *understands* the vocabulary.

Finally, consider what kind of responses you want. A pupil with physical disabilities may need to use eye gaze in response to a request such as 'Show me . . .'.