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## A Major Revision of the Reading Model for Classroom Teachers

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# A Major Revision of the Reading Model for Classroom Teachers

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## **Abstract**

Although many models of reading have evolved in the history of the field of reading, these models generally lack the simplicity necessary to be readily translated into methodology. Both pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in reading courses profit from a model of reading, since models aid the understanding of theory, and thus are prerequisite for translating theory into classroom practice.

# A MAJOR REVISION OF THE READING MODEL FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

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Although many models of reading have evolved in the history of the field of reading, these models generally lack the simplicity necessary to be readily translated into methodology. Both pre-service and in-service teachers enrolled in reading courses profit from a model of reading, since models aid the understanding of theory, and thus are prerequisite for translating theory into classroom practice.

For a number of years we have searched for a model that would meet the needs of teachers, i.e., be easy to understand and easy to apply. While we have been impressed with the many models of reading, the purpose of most models is to clarify reading theory and to aid in guiding future research, rather than to directly aid the pre-service or in-service teacher. With these criteria of simplicity and utility in mind, the Gray (1960) and Gray/Robinson (1966) models were selected for use with teachers, as these models are relatively straightforward and easily conceptualized theoretically even though they do not readily translate into practice. However, feeling a genuine need for a more usable model and following Robinson's assumption "that a conceptual framework for reading must be fluid and continuously refined," (1966) the Gray and Gray/Robinson models have been updated based on knowledge gained over the past ten years. Our purpose was to keep the new model understandable while making it easy to apply in the classroom.

The revised model presented here (an expansion of the model presented by Robinson, 1966) has much flexibility. It has been successfully used with both elementary and secondary pre-service and in-service teachers. In its expanded and revised form, the model provides a base broad enough to satisfy the differing needs of elementary and secondary teachers and, at the same time, to help both groups grasp an understanding of the aspects of a complete comprehensive reading program.

The Gray Model (1960) consists of four aspects: Word Perception, Comprehension, Reaction to What is Read, and Fusion of New Ideas and Old. Gray arranged these four aspects in concentric bands with word perception at the center. Robinson (1966) kept Gray's four basic aspects; however, she added a fifth aspect, which she called Rates.

Robinson also revised Gray's schematic in order for the graphic representation of the aspects to better depict reading theory and to demonstrate the potential for the unlimited growth of Gray's four aspects. Robinson's additional aspect, Rates, was superimposed over the other four aspects, to indicate that growth in Rates is dependent on the development of the other reading aspects and that Rates do not have the potential for unlimited growth. Robinson's new schematic may have been a stroke of genius. The open-endedness of the aspects coupled with a similar beginning point makes it easy to see that reading skills, although hierarchical within each aspect, are developed simultaneously.

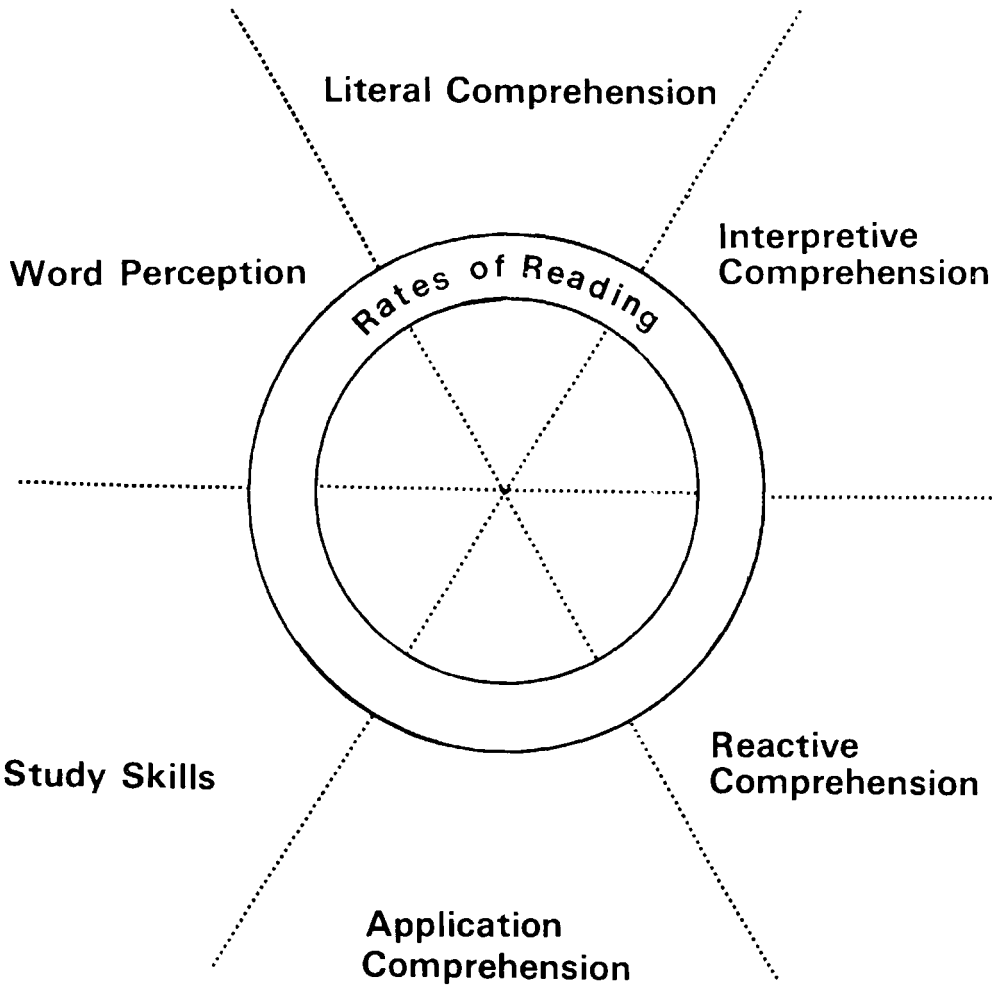
The revised model presented in this paper retains the basic graphic configuration of Robinson's model. However, the revised model redefines comprehension and adds study skills while retaining word perception and rates. The resulting model has seven aspects: Word Perception, Literal Comprehension, Interpretive Comprehension, Reactive Comprehension, Application Comprehension, Study Skills, and Rates.

#### *Definition of the Aspects*

The aspect of Word Perception, which includes the skills of word recognition and word meanings is identical to that aspect of the Gray and Gray/Robinson models. Word recognition includes all the skills a reader might use to decode an unknown word. Thus it includes all the "skills" presented in any good basal reading program. Although an implied hierarchy is present within each word recognition skill, research and arguments presented by Spache and Spache (1973) lead to the conclusion that all the components (skill areas) of word recognition should be developed congruently. Word meanings, as important as word recognition, is explained in detail by Gray and Robinson.

The aspect of Comprehension contains the major revisions between this model and the Gray and Robinson models. In this model, Comprehension has been renamed and regrouped. These changes have been made to reflect recent research and developments in the field of comprehension (Herber, 1978; Spache & Spache, 1973; Elijah and Legenza, 1978). In this new revised model, Comprehension is divided into four aspects: Literal, Interpretive, Reactive, and Applied. These four components constitute aspects of comprehension as defined by Herber (1978), Gray (1960), Robinson (1966), Spache & Spache (1973), and Elijah & Legenza (1978). An analysis of each of the above authors' works indicates agreement in having these aspects of comprehension as separate entities, although they use different terminologies to describe these aspects. The names for the four aspects of comprehension in this model are from Herber and Elijah & Legenza. These terms have been selected because they reflect the thinking process the reader must do to function at that level of comprehension.

Literal Comprehension can be defined as the ability to recall or



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recognize what is explicitly stated in the reading material. This aspect includes the ability to demonstrate a factual understanding of the material, the ability to translate the material into the reader's own words, and the ability to organize and regroup the concepts. Gray refers to these skills as the "ability to read the lines." Literal Comprehension, in the revised model, only includes one of the skills that he and Robinson grouped under Comprehension.

Interpretive comprehension is defined as the ability to make inferences. The reader who is functioning at the interpretive comprehension level is able to understand the relationships that may exist between the concepts presented in the reading selection. Gray refers to this ability as "reading between the lines."

The new revised model separates the aspect Gray and Robinson called Comprehension into two aspects, Literal and Interpretive Comprehension. Gray (1960) defined comprehension as involving "a clear grasp of the meaning of what is read" (p. 9), which often confuses teachers as it is not consistent with most recent work on questioning (Bloom, 1956; Sanders, 1966). Elijah and Legenza (1978) state that "only after the student knows the facts (literal) can he begin working out the relationships among the ideas presented in the material." Additional clarifications of comprehension by Herber (1978) also divide Gray's and Robinson's aspect, Comprehension, into two distinct aspects.

The aspect called Reactive Comprehension demands that the reader evaluate the concepts presented in the selection. The reader reacts to the selection and evaluates it both cognitively and affectively. Cognitive evaluation corresponds to the aspect called Reaction to What is Read by Gray and Robinson. The criteria used by the reader in making a cognitive evaluation are objective. This revised model adds affective evaluation. This is in keeping with recent work by Raths & Simons et al (1978) that children need to develop their own attitudes and values. In affective evaluation, the reader reacts to the material using his/her own values and attitudes as the criterion. Robinson came close to this in her revision of Gray's model by adding "Emotional Responses" to the definition of Reaction, but this model goes beyond that by adding a component where the student not only reacts according to emotions, but also according to personal values and attitudes.

Elijah and Legenza (1978) included cognitive evaluation under interpretive comprehension and had affective evaluation as a separate aspect. It is now felt that these are both types of evaluation, the difference being in the source of the criteria, cognitive being external to the reader, and, the other, affective being internal to the reader.

Application comprehension requires the reader to be able to apply material to both theoretical and pragmatic situations. The ability to apply what is read is the ultimate goal of reading comprehension (Elijah & Legenza). This is similar to Gray's aspect, Fusion of New Ideas and Old.

Robinson contends that the five aspects so far discussed can be developed either simultaneously or hierarchically. Elijah and Legenza

(1978) dispute this point. They argue that, although a hierarchy is implicit within the aspects of comprehension, each aspect must be developed as fully as possible within the framework of an individual reading assignment, thus developing the skills simultaneously at each point in the development of a reader.

The aspect of Study Skills has been included in this model. Study skills are the process skills (Herber, 1978) necessary for the aspects of comprehension to more readily function. They include the use of reference materials, techniques for effective studying, notetaking, skimming and scanning. Skimming and scanning are included in this aspect, rather than with rates, because they have the potential for unlimited growth. The techniques taught by such programs as Evelyn Wood have demonstrated that stupendous rates are possible through skimming and/or scanning.

By including study skills in the model, we have found that content teachers better understand the involved, often circular, relationship between reading skills, and the learning of content. They come to see that as study skills improve, comprehension and, therefore, learning skills also increase.

The last aspect, Rates, represents the reader's actual reading rates. The able reader should be flexible and able to adjust his rate to fit his purposes for reading. Actual reading rates range from very slow study type reading to very rapid reading rates. This aspect is similar to Robinson's Rates, except that this model includes only actual Reading Rates and has included skimming and scanning under study skills.

#### *Concluding Statement*

This paper has presented a revision of the Gray and Gray/Robinson reading models, reflecting knowledge about reading gained since their publication. We feel that the use of this revised model will not only aid teachers in better understanding the reading process, but will aid them in developing the student's reading skills. The revised model readily translates from theory to classroom methodology (Elijah & Legenza, 1978), utilizing such methods and techniques as presented by Elijah and Legenza (1978).

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