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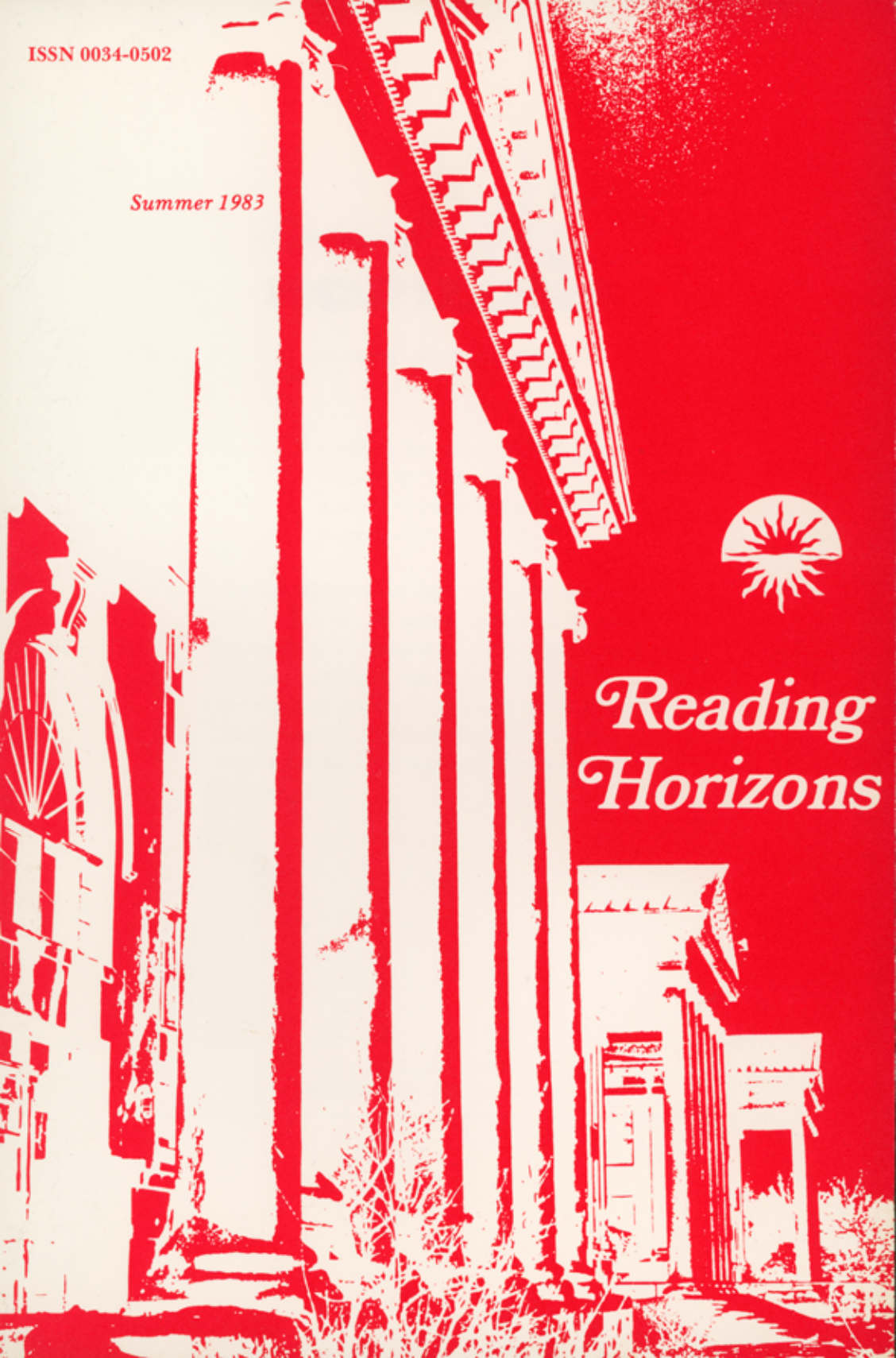


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# *Reading Horizons*





# *Reading* **HORIZONS**

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Kalamazoo, MI 49008

READING HORIZONS has been published quarterly since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo. As a journal devoted to the teaching of reading at all levels, it provides all interested professionals with the ideas, reports, and important developments that constitute the ever widening horizons of reading.

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# BURNOUT AND THE READING TEACHER

*James C. Sadler & James W. Cunningham*

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL

It's the end of the school day on Friday and most of the teachers are congregating in the lounge and classrooms, happily anticipating the weekend. Carole, however, walks straight to the parking lot without pausing to speak to colleagues as she did in former years. Today she informed the principal that she would not be renewing her contract as a remedial reading teacher and, although saddened by her decision, she also feels relief that months of increasing frustration and self-doubt have reached a conclusion.

She reflects upon the ideals and commitment she possessed as an undergraduate excelling in the teacher education program and recalls one professor's adage, "If the child doesn't learn, it's not the child's fault but the teacher's." She remembers her three years as a classroom teacher during which her youthful enthusiasm and creativity and her work after school on a Master's degree in reading education kept her too busy to examine her teaching effectiveness or job satisfaction. She thinks of five years spent as a remedial reading teacher and of the multitude of circumstances which prevented her from genuinely making a difference in the education of as many students as she had hoped. As Carole reaches her car, she vows to herself never again to allow a job to frustrate her and harm her self-esteem to this extent.

In later years Carole will tell friends that she "burned out" as a reading teacher. If pressed for details, she will cite abusive and unmotivated students, excessive administrative demands on her time, uncooperative teachers, apathetic parents, and lack of supervisory support. She will also feel, but probably never mention, a lingering hurt and shame that she somehow failed as a teacher.

Part of the tragedy of this hypothetical but all too familiar example of Carole is her feeling of isolation in dealing with the stress and depression culminating in burnout generated by her work as a remedial reading teacher. Ironically, her high levels of enthusiasm and success in her preservice education program

and the excitement of her initial teaching experience did little to prepare Carole for the inevitable frustrations and disappointments in remedial teaching over which she had little or no control. Although a certain amount of stress and other burnout-inducing factors are present in any teaching situation, the authors of this article propose that the realities of certain professionals, such as reading teachers, magnify stress to levels that require explicit acknowledgement and preparation on a collective, profession-wide basis.

#### Teacher Burnout

The causes and consequences of teacher burnout and suggested remedies for it have received extensive coverage in professional journals in recent years (Bardo, 1979; Hendrickson, 1979; Jones and Emanuel, 1981; McGuire, 1979; and Paulus, 1979). Many teachers experience to some degree one or a few symptoms of burnout: chronic or somatic physical problems, mental and physical exhaustion, tension, cynicism and hostility, apathy and depression, detachment from others, and negative self-concept. Many authors, such as Landsmann (1978), offer useful suggestions for combating the symptoms of stress and depression; plenty of exercise and rest, healthful dietary habits, separation of professional and personal problems, and time for hobbies and friends.

Needle, Griffin, Svendsen (1981), however, remind us that although exercise, sleep, and sound nutrition help increase resistance to stressors, they do not eliminate sources of stress. Occupational stress results from a discrepancy between the teacher's work needs and expectations and the failure of the work environment to provide occupational rewards. Needle et al. concluded from their study of Minnesota public school teachers that "Combinations of stressors...are not equally distributed among teachers, and some teachers are at a higher risk for health problems as a result of the nature of their work" (p. 180).

Burnout is often perceived as a problem for the individual, to be dealt with on a case by case basis according to situational and personality variations. There are practical reasons for this approach since an individual teacher can take steps to alleviate frustrating circumstances while organizational change for stress reduction is a slow, problematic process. Too often, however, this approach leads to greater isolation and depression since the teacher comes to believe the locus of the problem lies in his or her own shortcomings rather than in the particular demands and characteristics of the job. Certainly, some individuals may correctly decide that teaching is not the career for which they are best suited. The education profession, however, has a responsibility to teachers who have invested years of college and professional work to acknowledge the realities of burnout, to train preservice teachers in stress management, and to actively support the mental and physical well-being of teachers in the field. Maslach (1976), a pioneer investigator into the burnout phenomenon, has concluded that "many of the causes of burnout are located not in the permanent traits of the people involved, but in certain specific social and situational factors..." (p.22)

### The Missing Reward

To understand why remedial reading positions may generate more stress and depression than some other teaching jobs, we must examine those teacher needs which are in discrepancy with occupational realities. Surveying Florida teachers of Dade County, Lortie (1975) found 86.1% chose as their major source of work satisfaction, "the times I have 'reached' a student or group of students and they have learned" (p. 105). Psychic rewards, in other words, were the teachers' major source of gratification rather than monetary rewards or fringe benefits.

The formal means, such as achievement tests, which are used to evaluate whether a remedial reading teacher has "reached" a student often provide the teacher with disappointing or ambiguous feedback for his or her efforts. The growth of the accountability movement during the last decade has added public scrutiny and pressure to the stress inherent in this situation.

Tuinman (1973-1974) has shown that students do relatively well on reading comprehension subtests of the major achievement test batteries when they do not have the passage to read compared to when they do. Pyrczak (1981) has found that college students, at least, can select a high percentage of standardized test answers correctly when they are given only the multiple choice answers to the questions but not the question stems or passages themselves.

These two research studies show that the validity of the accepted standardized reading measures are correlational in nature. What this means is that giving a standardized reading test of a traditional type to students who have had incidental, developmental instruction probably provides a pretty good indication of how well they read. Using these measures to show growth will not work, however, because the tests are really tests of knowledge of the world, speed of intellectual processing, and test-taking skills (including testwiseness). No doubt, knowledge of the world, speed of processing, and testwiseness correlate well with reading ability, but any remedial reading program which does not specifically develop these factors will get very little gain on these measures regardless of how much gain has been achieved in real reading.

Criterion-referenced tests are tests on which one can, in fact, show growth. Unfortunately, they evaluate a teacher's program based on the means and not the ends of the program. When these tests are used diagnostically, testing the means is justified. But when they are used to evaluate the success of the remedial reading program then it is analogous to evaluating someone's gardening ability by seeing if s/he owns a hoe, a tiller, and fertilizer. Professional support, then, is needed and test data are not like to provide it. In fact, the more a reading teacher focuses on the improvement of students' ability to read with comprehension, the less likely those efforts are to bear fruit on either criterion- or norm-referenced tests. The seeds of burnout are often sown when a teacher's efforts are largely unrelated to "success" as measured by these tests.

Part of the tragedy of burnout is that disillusionment comes first to those teachers who had hoped to make a real difference in their students' lives. Freudenberger (1974), who helped to originate the term "burnout" a decade ago during his work with free clinics, states that it is the dedicated and committed who are prone to burnout: "We would rather put up than shut up... But it is precisely because we are dedicated that we walk into a burnout trap" (p. 161). Without detracting from other teaching roles, it must be said that remedial reading teachers demonstrate this commitment when they accept the special challenges encompassed in their jobs. When this commitment is extinguished through unrelieved stress and depression, the dynamics of burnout, complicated by anger and grief, bring about a real sense of mourning for lost ideals (Freudenberger, 1975, p. 165).

Perhaps teachers' hopes for success should be tempered at the beginning with an objective appraisal of what the teaching process actually involves. Hawley (1979) reminds us that teachers risk failure any time they engage in teaching and often experience failure to a significant extent, yet, "...if there is a universal aspect of the teaching experience that is discussed less, one wonders what it is" (p. 39). Lack of success for a remedial reading teacher is particularly discouraging since this teacher is seen by others as a "safety net" who will somehow provide an academic rescue for a student who has failed in other settings. Hawley (1979) points out that fear of failure in teaching often results in the adoption of non-teaching practices such as rigid, set procedures or total lack of instructional direction.

For teachers who do risk failure through experimentation and originality, continued lack of successful results with remedial students may result in a "learned helplessness" syndrome similar to that reported for academically disabled students. Thomas (1979) reports that the phenomenon of learned helplessness develops when one sees no relation between effort and attainment of certain outcomes. In such cases the person reduces effort and no longer attains former performance levels. In a teaching situation, this means that the teacher is merely going through the motions without any expectation of significant educational progress. At this point the teacher is certainly doing a disservice to his or her own students and some type of intervention is required. The question remains as to whether that teacher was in turn done a disservice by a profession which failed to provide support and encouragement necessary to prevent deterioration of the situation.

#### Burnout: A Personal or Professional Problem?

Certainly, as the popular posters around schools state, "No one ever said teaching was going to be easy," but prospective teachers should be warned that they often must face professional problems and anxieties alone, without the benefit of collegial support.

The development of ideals and standards for teachers is often done at the expense of sufficient attention paid to the reality context in which the ideals must be implemented. Teachers like

Carole in our opening scenario have graduated from programs where learning theorists are studied who claim that success is ensured by exacting application of their respective learning models. These teachers use materials claimed by publishers or their sales staff to be "teacher proof" and sure to excite and motivate any student to learn. They get jobs in schools where any admission of difficulty or uncertainty is likely to be a liability at contract renewal or evaluation time. They interact with other teachers who are also reluctant to reveal any professional problems or weaknesses. Thus, professional concerns which should be openly discussed and resolved become guilt and resentment inducing deep personal problems.

An obvious implication of this situation is that teachers must have opportunities to openly discuss sources of their own frustrations and to collectively support others experiencing stress and depression. Remedial reading teachers may be able to alleviate many former private miseries by sharing their concerns and developing group problem solving strategies. For instance, reading teachers frustrated at the lack of relevance achievement testing holds for their teaching efforts may develop alternative ways of "keeping score." Remedial reading teachers must understand that they have to have other means for showing themselves and significant others that they in fact have accomplished something important.

Educators must respond to burnout on an institutional as well as personal basis, however. Cherniss (1980) argues that dealing with organizational factors such as job structure and work organization is more productive than attempting to alter the personality of the individual. Educational institutions can no longer tolerate a high teacher turnover rate as an acceptable response to job stress. Dean Corrigan (1981), president of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, cites teacher burnout as the principal problem in schools today and as a contributing cause of an imminent teacher shortage. Teachers are dropping out not only because of low salaries, but "... because the conditions they need to practice their profession do not exist" (p. 26).

Finally, there is reason for serious concern in the education profession when faith is placed in methods, materials, and testing rather than in teachers themselves. In an era when there are numerous self-appointed experts on education gaining public attention, teachers such as remedial reading teachers must remember that they have an obligation as professionals to trust their own judgment in instructional matters, and to advocate policies and conditions which are in the best interests of their students.

#### A Personal Note to the "Burning Out."

If you are "burning out," the causes are much more likely to be outside than inside you. Nonetheless, until teacher burnout in general, or reading teacher burnout in specific, is seen as more of a professional problem than an individual problem, you are left largely on your own to deal with your frustrations. We

would like to offer our personal feelings on the matter, hoping that soon our profession will act to make these personal feelings unnecessary or obsolete.

As we see it, there are five areas which have an impact on reading teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction:

Teacher Competence—How well you can do the job that needs to be done given proper support.

Teacher confidence— How well you believe you can do what needs to be done given the actual job situation you have.

Teacher dedication—How hard you would be willing to work if you knew your efforts would meet with real success.

Leadership — How much encouragement and direction you get in doing the job that needs to be done.

Support —How much discretion you have in the quantity and quality of materials you use; how much cooperation you receive from other professionals with whom you come in contact while attempting to do your job; how many financial rewards and fringe benefits you receive; and, planning time, freedom from paper work, advocacy when criticized, etc.

It is in one or more of these five areas that relief must come for the burning or the burned out.

To begin with, we suggest that you do an honest, personal assessment of yourself and your job in each of the five areas. Be fair but be frank. Use this time to come to as much of an understanding as you can about the realities of your current situation in your profession. Next, make a plan to correct or improve one problem or situation which you feel is contributing to your burnout. Then, carry out your plan. Continue with this process of assessment—plan—carry out plan, one "hassle" at a time. Celebrate any success you have, seek out other reading teachers who are burning out and help them to assess—plan—carry out, and clamor to anyone who is important and who will listen that remedial reading teachers need and want more leadership and support. Reading teacher burnout is a professional problem with personal consequences for both teachers and students; let us deal with it as a profession.

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# RELIABILITY OF READING INTEREST ASSESSMENT: AN APPLIED STUDY

*Rosie Webb Joels & Betty Anderson*

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Learning is most efficient when there is a drive or personal curiosity stimulating the learner's active involvement. This motivation encompasses different factors within the affective domain, such as attitude, interest, and satisfaction.

Utilization of reading interests, i.e., appealing topics, in the instructional program is one way of arousing and maintaining students' motivation for learning tasks. Not only is personal involvement increased, but students' overall reading achievement has been found to be positively related to the amount of their recreational reading (Sauls 1971; Yap, 1977). Further, achievement, as reflected by comprehension scores within individual reading passages, has been found to be higher when the topics are of interest to the students (Bernstein, 1955; Vaughan, 1974).

Teachers who make decisions about students' recreational reading choices can more efficiently make those decisions if a measurement procedure has identified students' reading interests. Accuracy and subsequent usefulness of the measurement procedure is affected by many factors; among these factors is the stability of students' likes and dislikes among reading topics.

Stability of reading interests within an individual student is important for the long-range planning of reading materials for a classroom or for a library collection. The selection and acquisition of materials is costly in both time and money. Material acquired, therefore, should be of interest long after they have initially been identified as being among a student's, or students' reading interests.

The identification process of reading interests is improved when the measurement technique used has a high degree of reliability. For example, if students expressed their sentiments toward a series of reading topics today, to what degree would the assessment tool yield similar results at a later date? The differences in results may be influenced by many factors; among the influences are limited sampling, change in the task, or change within the individual (Thorndike and Hagen, 1977, p. 74).

The purpose of this study was to compare two of the influences affecting the reliability of reading interest assessment. Specifically, does change in students' reading interests influence test-retest reliability of an instrument used to assess those interests?

In addition, does the magnitude of that influence reduce the usefulness of such assessment for long-range planning?

#### Review of Literature

There have been over 300 studies on reading interests (King, 1967) with extensive research conducted on the topic during the 1960's and early 70's. By the end of the decade 1970-80, however, interest in this area of research was limited.

Berstein (1955) investigated the relationship between reading interests and comprehension. One hundred junior high school students read two stories controlled for readability and interest. One story emphasized action, suspense and a teen-age hero while the other was basically descriptive and lacked human action. The students were significantly more interested in the action story and also achieved significantly higher comprehension scores.

Using second-graders Yap (1977) studied the relationship between the amount of reading and reading achievement. Correlations were .84 and .77 between amount of books read and reading vocabulary and comprehension standardized test scores. In contrast, correlations between IQ and the vocabulary and comprehension scores were .47 and .49. The differences between these coefficients were statistically significant. Sauls (1971) also found significant relationship between the number of books students read and their reading comprehension levels.

Harris & Sipay (1975) stated that "it is difficult to make definitive statements regarding the reading interests of children." They note that common definitions of basic terms are not established in the literature and also that sampling techniques vary greatly. In a critical review of research, Robinson and Weintraub (1973) concluded that much research about children's reading habits has been criticized due to inadequate methods. They noted that the findings differ with the methods used. Verifying this inconsistency, Monson (1968) reported obtaining different results from the same students when two methods were used to gather data. A structured design using true-false and multiple choice format was compared with an unstructured design in which the subjects wrote their reactions in their own words.

Reliability is another question which needs to be raised when assessing children's reading interests, and it is an area which needs to be improved (Robinson and Weintraub, 1973). Noting that very few researchers have measured the reliability of the instruments used to measure children's interests in reading, Weintraub (1968) stated that determination of reliability is necessary if the findings are to be accepted.

#### Procedures

##### Subjects

The subjects for this study consisted of all the fifth graders in a small town of primarily agricultural interests in central Florida. Two elementary schools serve the total community. Data were collected on a total of 173 students. Seventy-one (71) of the students were from a school with self-contained classrooms with the remaining 103 subjects at a larger open space school.

All students who were present participated in the test administrations. One student was unable to read the survey form and it was read to him by one of the researchers. The group was approximately equally divided between males and females. Information on reading level of the subjects was available only from one school. Of these 71 students, 21 were judged by the teacher to be below average in reading achievement, 25 were average, and 25 were above average.

#### Instrumentation

Data were collected for this study using two parallel forms of a reading survey developed in an earlier investigation (Joels, 1978). From a pool of fictitious annotated titles, three items for each of six interest categories had been chosen for each form. The categories had been selected based on their use in earlier reading interest studies and on their ability to elicit strong positive or negative sentiment in those studies. The total interest inventory had been judged valid by a panel of professionals in the field of children's literature. The following criteria were used to judge the instruments' appropriateness: (1) suitability of reading level for fifth grade students; (2) mutual exclusivity of the categories; and (3) suitability of titles for interest categories into which they had been placed.

#### Administration

The Reading Interest Survey was administered to the subjects three times. Two administrations were in December. Form A was given first with form B used the following week. The final administration in May was form B.

All the administrations at both schools followed the same format. A brief explanation of the purpose of the survey was read followed by the directions. There was no time limit and the forms were collected as the students finished them.

#### Results of the Study

The product-moment correlation coefficients (Downie and Heath, 1974) were computed for each interest category using the summed title scores from each of the forms A and B. The correlation coefficients were derived also from forms A and B, administered over a six-month interval.

Table 1  
Test Reliability as  
Measured by Parallel Forms/Test-Retest:  
One-Week Interval vs. Six-Months Interval

Reading interest category	1 week $r_{1'2}$	36 weeks $r_{1'3}$	difference
Fantasy	.67	.65	-.02
Love and Romance	.80	.76	-.04
Mystery/Adventure	.82	.74	-.08
Religion	.74	.64	-.10
Science	.65	.58	-.07
Sports	.81	.72	-.09

An examination of Table 1 reveals the two sets of coefficients for the two intervals of the administrations. Each category had a lower coefficient for the six-month interval than for the one-week interval. This reduction ranged from a low of .02 (Fantasy) to a high of .10 (Religion). These differences were not further analyzed nor tested for statistical significance.

The results indicate that there is a lack of stability in students' reading interests that can be measured in addition to the test-retest parallel form reliability of the instrument. This change in sentiment for individual students, however, does not appear to be large when reliabilities for one-week interval and thirty-six week interval are compared. It is concluded from this result that individual students' reading choices do not change markedly over a period of six months.

The categories were rank ordered after each of the three administrations. Table 2 reveals the category order that was common to all three administration results.

Table 2  
Rank Order of Reading  
Interest Categories (High to Low)

1. Mystery-Adventure
2. Fantasy
3. Religion
4. Love and Romance
5. Sports
6. Science

The rank ordering of the categories from the students' responses presents further evidence of the stability of reading interests within the total group. In each of the three administrations, identical rankings were obtained with Mystery/Adventure being the most preferred category and Science being the least preferred category.

While the correlation coefficients do not appear to be strong for the thirty-six week interval reliability, they do compare well to the reliabilities considered acceptable in the assessment of affective constructs (Vaughan and Sabers, 1977). Thorndike and Hagen (1977) state that reliability of measurement needs to be evaluated in terms of the accuracy necessary for decision making; the reliability needed for decisions about groups does not need to be as high as that needed for decisions about individuals while maintaining accuracy of conclusions.

The usefulness of reading interests assessment is not impaired by the change in students' reading interests across a thirty-six week interval. Thus, the decision making process for materials selections can be made with confidence that the reading-for-recreation needs of the total group and the individuals within the group will be met.

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# RECONCILING DIFFERENCES IN TEST RESULTS: COMPREHENSION

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In planning an instructional program for Brenda you have discovered that one of her tests indicates an instructional level of fourth grade for comprehension and another test shows comprehension at the high second grade level. How can both results be accurate? How do you decide about their accuracy? If both are true what does that indicate about her profile of abilities? How can you turn what appears to be a testing anomaly into useful diagnostic information?

## Inaccurate, Misleading, or Irrelevant Test Results

There is always the possibility that one of your test results is inaccurate. Many of the diagnostic tests have only one or two brief passages per grade level. Some prior experience with the topic, a relevant schema, may help students in answering questions even on passages they cannot actually read well; the lack of such experience can distort comprehension even when a student accurately decodes the passage. For example, on the Diagnostic Reading Survey (Spache, 1972) there is a passage that talks about shifting gears as a metaphor for shifting speeds in reading. A bright third grader could decode the passage, but was stumped by a question about shifting from gear to gear, for which nothing in her experience had prepared her. An error on this question brought her below the criterion for comprehension at the seventh level. Was this result accurate? Perhaps not, though in this case it didn't matter all that much—it was obvious that she could read orally with comprehension passages several years above her grade level.

It's also possible that the test you are using is intended only for global differentiation. For example, the Gray Oral Reading Test (Gray & Robinson, 1967) gives a reasonably precise estimate at lower grade levels but has a standard error of estimate of more than one year at the upper levels. This means that for a student with a tested grade equivalent of tenth grade on the Gray, his/her "true" score is likely to range between eighth and twelfth grades (the score plus or minus two standard errors of measurement). Because of the imprecision of measurement on many tests, you may not have strong grounds for interpreting differences between tests or subtests unless scores are two or three years apart or other observations support these findings.

Some testing strategies produce results that are not inaccurate but are potentially open to misinterpretation. You may decide to administer a test in a nonstandard way, but if you do, you must take that into consideration in interpreting results. For instance, allowing bright students to begin two thirds of the way through a test may deprive them of the benefit from practice on easier items and they may thus receive a somewhat deflated score. More often, though, the problem is an inflated score. Going past the specified cutoff point of decoding errors for oral reading on a test such as the Standard Reading Inventory (McCracken, 1966), for example, may yield valuable information, yet if you want to use the test norms you must score responses in terms of the normal cutoff and only report the later responses as additional information. (You also need to consider whether the nonstandard administration will "spoil" that test for use with this student during the next year.)

If you are diagnosing a student who often declines to answer questions, you may decide to test limits by pushing harder or waiting longer than usual for a response, or to probe by modifying the test item to determine the conditions under which he/she can succeed. If you want to test the limits of students' thinking but are using an informal reading inventory that provides only literal questions, you may want to add some inferential questions or to have the students recall the story in order to assess their grasp of the theme and structure (unless the passage is too short or too devoid of plot or motivation to stimulate a revealing retelling). Any kind of deviation from a standard presentation may be well-justified, but you need to consider whether your presentation has so altered the test that it is unreasonable for you to use the norms or grade designations based on the assumption of a standardized presentation. If you find a discrepancy between a test result derived for a standard presentation, a conservative procedure is to accept the standard measure as a reasonable estimate of a student's usual performance but also to use the probed responses on this test or the nonstandard presentation of another test as an indication of the range of response available to the student under optimal conditions.

In addition, some tests may be irrelevant. If you are interested in assessing comprehension, a test of vocabulary in isolation such as the Wide Range Achievement Test, though it provides a score called "Reading," misses the mark by a wide margin. High scores on such a test, however, rule out decoding skills as a source of comprehension problems. Such narrow-band tests, though, should not be interpreted as a measure of comprehension.

If, however, you've checked and found that none of the troublesome test results are not inaccurate, misleading, or irrelevant, you face perhaps the most intricate problem in diagnosis, determining why two tests that supposedly assess the same thing yield different results for a given student.

#### Examining Differences Between Tests

Sometimes your test results are accurate, reasonably precise and obtained in a standard manner, yet two findings are incontro-

vertibly different. That's when (after deciding whether the discrepancy is important enough to investigate) a true professional brings to bear all of his/her knowledge and analytic skills in attempting to reconcile test differences, perhaps the most demanding aspect of diagnosis. What are the differences in the responses required to demonstrate competence on these two tests? Even on two tests that supposedly measure the same ability there may be important differences in (1) modes of presentation and response; (2) thinking processes required; or (3) scoring procedures and criteria for success. If you consider carefully these differences between tests, you may resolve discrepancies or, better yet, obtain a more finely differentiated profile of abilities for a student.

#### Differences in Modes of Presentation and Response

Reading/language tests vary in the way materials are presented and the responses by which reading performance is measured. Presentation differences such as page format can produce significant disparities in test scores, particularly at lower grade levels. For example, tests which have the questions separate from the passage can be a problem and tests which require a separate answer sheet can be a disaster for some students. Other students, especially in the earlier grades, might be disturbed by the cloze format for comprehension of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests (1973) or the complex task structure for the Word Meaning subtest of the Test of Reading Comprehension (Brown, Hammill, & Wiederholt, 1978), for example, unless they've had prior experience with that format.

For some students, performance varies greatly depending on whether the material is presented orally or in print. It's not unusual for a student's score on a listening comprehension test or subtest to be higher than his/her score on a reading comprehension test. A low reading comprehension score paired with a much higher listening comprehension score presents a much different diagnostic picture than a low reading comprehension score paired with an equally low listening comprehension score.

Tests also differ in the responses by which they ask the reader to demonstrate comprehension. The primary dimensions of variation for response mode are oral versus written and recall versus recognition (production versus selection). Each year Mark consistently scored better on the end of the year achievement test than he did on teacher-made tests of comprehension and in the workbook. This discrepancy frustrated his parents and puzzled his fifth grade teacher, Miss Long, who could not understand why Mark did not do better in class. Mrs. Sherman, the reading teacher, was asked to consult on the problem. After observing Mark's classwork in reading and his test performance, she found one possible explanation for the score differences.

Mark had a severe writing problem. In fact he even had difficulty copying material from the board, much less spelling words recognizably. Mark's writing problem precluded successful performance in classroom reading where success depended primarily upon written responses to comprehension questions. On the other hand, Mark's contributions in discussion reflected good comprehension.



Discussion performance, however, was not part of the criteria for grading reading performance in Mark's class. Mrs. Sherman pointed out the probable reasons for Mark's differences in performance in comprehension and explained to Miss Long the importance of providing alternative measures of comprehension performance.

Miss Long thought Mrs. Sherman's discovery was an important one and she immediately brought another child to her attention. Miss Long observed that Cindy did not do well in her written work or the group discussions, yet her achievement test scores were as impressive as Mark's. After reviewing Cindy's classwork and test performance, Mrs. Sherman found that Cindy consistently did better on measures which gave her multiple choices and asked her to select a response than on measures which asked to create a response. The achievement test she took each year used the recognition format to measure reading ability. Miss Long and Mrs. Sherman discussed this difference and planned some trial teaching lessons to collect more information to solve the problem of Cindy's apparent difficulty in producing responses on comprehension measures.

One of the most common kinds of discrepancy is the difference between a student's performances on measures of oral and silent reading comprehension. Since both kinds of measures are frequently used in assessing and evaluating reading performance, it is crucial that the diagnostician understand and be sensitive to the differential effects that are a result of the requirements of these two tasks. Differences between a student's performances on oral and silent reading can sometimes be traced to his/her perceptions of the purpose of the task. If the student senses that the teacher is interested in correct pronunciation and fluency in oral reading, he/she may limit processing of text to the surface structure language and not attend to units of meaning. Thus, a pattern might emerge which shows one reader to have much better comprehension when reading silently than orally. The reverse may be true for another reader, who conceives of silent reading as "brushing the print with your eyes," and depends upon the auditory trace of his oral reading to aid his comprehension and memory.

Prior instruction or practice can also cause comprehension performance differences. Beginning readers typically practice much of their reading orally. Moreover, most of their pre-school experience with reading was through having accomplished readers read books orally to them. Thus beginning readers often perceive reading as a task that naturally involves production of speech, and a diagnostician might expect their oral reading to be better than their silent reading.

One type of reader who is frequently misdiagnosed because of a failure to reconcile oral and silent test performances is the highly anxious or nervous child. High levels of anxiety clearly affect the fluency with which skilled behavior can be conducted. Reading orally in a testing situation, especially if the reader has a history of failure, can be traumatic, and no amount of examiner rapport can entirely overcome this feeling. The result is a product which reflects numerous oral reading miscues and most likely a depressed comprehension score or such an intense concentration on oral accuracy that comprehension suffers. For

some of these children, the privacy of silent reading provides a comfortable haven which allows them to conduct the reading process with the required fluency.

### Differences in Processing

Tests also vary in the thinking processes they require or permit. The types of processing may include location of explicitly stated answers to a literal question, transformation of explicit information in text into a slightly different form, drawing inferences about the relationship between two facts stated in the text or about the relationship of a fact in the text and information drawn from the readers' experience, and judgments about the structure or purpose of the text. One arrangement may permit a given reader to use his preferred processing strategies, while another arrangement forces him/her to use less familiar or less comfortable strategies. For example, a student who is used to being asked "What color was John's coat?" may be derailed when asked "What is the main idea of this story?" In contrast, a student who is used to reading independently to gather information relevant to solution of a broad problem may be startled if asked a question about a bit of information no bigger than his/her thumbnail. Either of these assessment procedures is legitimate and useful, but the two strategies are likely to interact with a student's experiences and expectations for comprehension questions and ultimately require different cognitive processes.

Some readers are affected more than others by the cognitive demands of the reading test. Tina, for example, integrates information from her reading well and connects it to her personal experiences. On the Silent Reading subtest of the Durrell Analysis of Reading she had little opportunity to display these skills and in fact missed some points for small factual errors. (Points are allotted on the basis of number of facts recalled, major or minor.) On the Reading Miscue Inventory (Goodman & Burke, 1971), though, she obtained a relatively high comprehension score by retelling the major points of a story in a coherent fashion. A student with a set toward surface level processing and retention of details might have had exactly the opposite pattern.

Results on comprehension tests may also vary depending on whether the questions require the student to deal with directly stated facts, simple transformations of text-explicit material or for example more inferential processing. When the test states "Before he ate dinner Jack rode his bicycle," the question might ask "What did Jack do after he rode his bicycle?" On the other hand, the test may incorporate questions which deal with more implicit relationships in the text and demand inferences and applications by the reader. Tom does well on exact recall of facts, but because he fails to combine information from the text with his experiences and common sense, he does poorly on tests such as the new Metropolitan Intermediate Survey Test (Prescott, Balow, Hogan & Farr, 1978), which taps higher level thinking skills. Performance on comprehension questions can not be lumped together indiscriminately. To obtain an accurate student profile, the diagnostician must consider the cognitive requirement of the questions and the individual differences of the reader.

### Differences in Scoring and in Criteria for Success

Test scores sometimes differ because responses scored as errors on one test may not be scored as errors on another test. For example, hesitations and repetitions in oral reading are scored in oral accuracy counts that along with comprehension, determine grade levels on Silveroli's Classroom Inventory, while on other measures, such as the Johns' Basic Reading Inventory (1981), only meaning-change errors are counted for the word recognition criteria. Thus, a reader may make 10 unexpected responses while reading, yet only four of them change the author's intended meaning. Clearly there will be significant discrepancy on how these two tests judge a reader's competence if the score is accepted on face value without thoughtful interpretation by the diagnostician.

Variation in IRI test scores can also complicate the diagnostician's effort to establish an instructional comprehension performance level. The criterion established by the authors for a number of tests is 75% while several others use 60% as their cutoff for satisfactory performance. Ignoring the fuzziness or lack of precision of comprehension criteria can obscure evidence of the reader's competence and hinder the diagnostician from assembling an accurate description of the reader's abilities.

The problem of a satisfactory comprehension criterion is especially troublesome when it interacts with the type of processing required. Some reading tests, such as the Basic Reading Inventory, (Johns, 1981) are designed to assess various features of a reader's comprehension ability. The tests examine the reader's prior knowledge through vocabulary and inference questions, reasoning ability through inference and evaluation questions and information pick-up through literal level questions. It is easy to imagine a reader who receives ten questions; he answers six of seven literal level questions correctly and misses the vocabulary, inference, and evaluation questions. Using a comprehension criterion of 75%, this student would have failed this passage. Without thoughtful reconciliation, this reader's poor comprehension performance on the Basic Reading Inventory could be quite confusing if the diagnostician was trying to compare the result to another comprehension measure which used only passage dependent literal level questions. Using tests which "average" together a number of different comprehension aspects is a common practice and the diagnostician must be aware of the effects on the data.

It's been suggested in this section that in attempting to reconcile discrepant scores on reading comprehension measures the diagnostician consider whether two tests differ in the way they present materials, the way students must respond, the kinds of processing required, the means of scoring, and the criteria set for success. Although we've discussed these separately, in practice they are generally interdependent factors. The differences we've discussed are surely not the only ones that matter, but they provide a good start toward analyzing and reconciling test differences.

### Deriving a Profile of Abilities

Our intent has been to point out how test differences can

occur and how to make sense of them. We would like to take that a step further and suggest that you "bracket" your readers' comprehension ability by deliberately using tests with different characteristics. In this way you can gauge the range of their ability. A comparison of two readers, Larry and Ron, on three measures of reading helps to illustrate this point.

On one measure of comprehension Larry and Ron seemed very similar in ability, but an examination of differences from one test to another reveals different profiles of abilities. On tests given in February their scores were:

	<u>Larry - 6th Grade</u>	<u>Ron - 6th Grade</u>
Gray Oral Reading	6.0	5.0
Durrell Silent Reading Comprehension	6.0	5.0
Metropolitan Survey	4.5	7.0

For Larry there was no difference between scores on silent and oral reading on tests that emphasize literal comprehension. The Metropolitan, however, emphasizes inference, a major weakness of Larry's.

Ron's silent reading score was higher than his oral reading scores, although both scores were based on literal comprehension. His score on the Gray Oral Reading test was brought down by a number of small, meaning-preserving errors in oral reading. Although he was not outstanding on tests composed primarily of literal questions, he performed better than his age-mates on a test which emphasized inferential questions, as the high score on the Metropolitan Survey indicated. He could use signal words and text structures, in combination with his own experiences, to infer meanings not explicitly stated.

This pattern was also observed when the examiner conducted a functional analysis of the boys' skill and efficiency in using their content area text in science and social studies. Larry could use the Table of Contents and Index if the reference was listed under the heading he expected, but if he were looking for trucks and found no such thing, it never occurred to him to look under transportation. He could use subheadings to locate major divisions of the text but could not easily skim to locate specific facts. He read carefully but became swamped with facts and had difficulty selecting key points or tying them together. Ron was a little less efficient on the mechanical aspects of content area reading, but used the structure of the material to help him locate, organize, and evaluate facts. He was a flexible reader, varying his speed and depth of processing to suit his purpose, the time available, and the difficulty of the material. The test scores, taken together with purposeful observations, delineated sharply different profiles of comprehension abilities for these two boys.

#### Summary

While across large groups of students two tests may be highly correlated, specific characteristics of tests may interact with specific characteristics of students to yield differences in scores

for one individual on two or more tests. These differences may provide valuable information but require thoughtful interpretation. Examining and reconciling differences in test results for a student can help you not only to provide more accurate interpretations of test results but to gain a more complex and useful understanding of each student. The student's abilities, experiences and attitudes interact with specific features of each test; the thoughtful diagnostician can use the real and apparent discrepancies between tests to sketch the profile of abilities unique to a given student and to develop individual educational plans appropriate for that student.

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# AN ADVANCE ORGANIZER IS . . . ALL OR NONE OF THE ABOVE

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What is an advance organizer? Some possible responses for multiple-choice question proposed in the title could be:

- a 200-500 word prose passage (Ausubel, 1960, 1963);
- a single sentence (Christie and Schumacher, 1976; Luderer, 1976);
- a graphic presentation (Dana, 1980; Eastman, 1977; Hall, 1977; Weisberg, 1970);
- a "thematic" organizer in the form of a picture, one-word topic, or a title (Farr, 1975);
- a methodology such as DRA or SQ3R (Garty, 1975);
- a slide-verbal presentation (Jones, 1977, 1979; Lawton and Wanska, 1979);
- an "organizer" lesson (Lawton, 1977; Lawton and Fowell, 1978; Swadener and Lawton, 1977);
- an audio presentation (Lucas and Fowler, 1975);
- a concrete model (Mayer, 1976);
- an empty matrix with the horizontal and vertical axes specified (Mayer, 1978);
- a game (Scandura and Wells, 1967);
- a map (Weisberg, 1970);
- a structured overview (Earle, 1969; Estes, Mills, and Barron, 1969)

The purpose of this article is to review the guidelines for the construction of an advance organizer as proposed by Ausubel and to examine why the choice in the title "all or none of the above" could be literally true.

## Ausubel's Proposal

In 1960 Ausubel published his first account of the use of advance organizers. In later textbooks (Ausubel, 1963; Ausubel and Robinson, 1969; Ausubel, Novak, and Hanesian, 1978) he and his colleagues have explicated a theory of meaningful verbal learning in which the learner plays a central role. They have stated

this quite forcefully as follows:

If we had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, we would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly. (Ausubel et al., 1978, p. 163)

The principal teaching strategy recommended for the deliberate manipulation of the learner's cognitive structure so as to enhance meaningful verbal learning is the use of "appropriate relevant and inclusive introductory materials (organizers)" (Ausubel et al., 1978, p. 170). These organizers are to be used in advance of the learning experience in order to establish a meaningful learning set and to "bridge the gap between what the learner already knows and what he needs to know before he can meaningfully learn the task at hand" (pp. 171-172). Advance organizers should provide the "ideational scaffolding" or superordinate ideas under which new subordinate ideas (to be learned in the subsequent lesson) may be subsumed.

Although Ausubel has not provided either an operational definition or examples of an advance organizer, for which he has been criticized by a number of reviewers (Blanton and Tuinman, 1973; Hartley and Davis, 1976; Thelen, 1976; Vacca, 1978), he has specified the characteristics which advance organizers should have (Ausubel et al., 1978). (1) They should be more inclusive, abstract, and general than the learning material they precede in order to provide a framework for the stable incorporation and retention of the more detailed material to be learned. (2) They must take into account the relevant existing ideas that learners have about the topic. (3) They must demonstrate the relationship between the ideas learners already have and the new ideas to be learned. (4) If the learners have few relevant existing ideas, the advance organizer needs to be more expository in nature; i.e., teachers will need to provide more informational framework, being careful, however, to use terminology familiar to the learners. (5) If the new material can be related to a cognitive framework already possessed by the learners, the advance organizer should be comparative in nature. It is then used "to integrate new ideas with basically similar concepts in cognitive structure and to increase discriminability between new and existing ideas that are essentially different but confusably similar" (Ausubel et al., 1978, p. 172).

In the preceding paragraph, the word "learners" has been emphasized by the author each time it occurred in order to point out that four out of the five characteristics are related directly to the knowledge that the researcher or teacher must have about the learners before an advance organizer can be planned. And even the first characteristic is related indirectly, since the level of inclusiveness, abstractness, and generality will be determined not only by the level of the subsequent material to be learned but also by the capabilities of the learners; e.g., the concept, "dog," may be abstract for a two-year-old.

### All or None of the Above

It seems obvious that any given advance organizer can only be planned in terms of the cognitive gap it is designed to bridge. One may study the building of bridges in general, or the building of specific types of bridges, but the specifications for a particular bridge will depend on the width of the chasm to be spanned and many other factors. Or, if the metaphor of an advance organizer as ideational scaffolding is carried a bit further, one does not erect scaffolding for a particular building without a blueprint of both the foundation and the completed structure. A perusal of the research on advance organizers reveals an appalling lack of attention to (or, at any rate, lack of reporting of) the existing cognitive structures of the learners in the experimental and control groups. Statements abound such as "It was believed that..." and "It was assumed that..." such-and-such a cognitive state existed in the subjects. Information from pretests or other such pertinent data which would indicate the learners' existing cognitive structures were not given in the majority of the reports (Searls, 1980).

Ausubel did not specify the format for an advance organizer. In his studies with college undergraduates he used prose passages (approximately 200-500 words) which students read before reading the new material. In a recent analysis of 135 published and unpublished advance organizer studies, Luiten, Ames, and Ackerson (1980) found that the great majority of them employed a similar written organizer passage. However, as indicated by the introductory paragraph, a number of other types of presentation modes have been researched. It is not within the scope of this article to discuss the reported effectiveness of one type of presentation over another, although it should be noted that Luitaen et al. (1980) found the Effect Size for aural mode advance organizer studies to be twice that of written mode advance organizer studies.

The important point to be made is that any introductory activity which adheres to Ausubel's five characteristics for an advance organizer should be successful in enhancing meaningful verbal learning. However, in order for the advance organizer to have the stated characteristics, the user must possess detailed knowledge of the cognitive structures of the learners for whom the advance organizer is intended. Classroom teachers are most likely to have this knowledge and to be able to plan and implement effective advance organizers. In this writer's opinion, the best single source for classroom teachers who want to understand and use advance organizers is probably Eggen, Kauchak, and Harder's (1979) text, Strategies for Teachers: Information Processing In The Classroom, Chapter 7, "The Ausubel Model." Searls (1980) has summarized Eggen et al.'s ideas and presented other suggestions for using advance organizers in the classroom.

Jones (1979), Lawton and Wanska (1977), Mayer (1979), and Meyer (1979) all have hypothesized that perhaps advance organizers have failed to result in significantly improved learning in many research studies either because the learners were able to provide their own subsumers or because the organizers were not sufficient



to bridge the gap. In both instances, ascertaining the prior knowledge of the learners might have changed the results. Researchers investigating the efficacy of advance organizers in the future would do well to report how they followed Ausubel's guidelines for the construction of an advance organizer. To the extent that they do follow the guidelines and report the knowledge they obtained about the learner's cognitive structures, "all of the above" may be the correct conclusion to the stem, "An advance organizer is..." If they do not follow the guidelines and report the procedures, "none of the above" may be true.

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# THE RETURN TO PROCESS: THE READING EXAMPLE

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A growing number of reading educators are adjusting the primary focus of their attention from learner performance to learner competence. The rationale of this shift from a product to a process orientation lies in the assumption that even the youngest humans are able to observe, categorize, associate, hypothesize, revise, integrate information, and solve problems. These learning strategies enable humans not only to think and to talk, but also to become literate. Oral language and reading are viewed, therefore, as constructive processes, reflective of the particular culture which gives rise to them. These processes develop in response to meaningful experiences, and they in turn aid in the cultivation of the learning strategies. With its roots in psycholinguistics, this perspective has gained acceptance at national levels.

Demonstrating such an orientation, the 1979 & '80 conventions of the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of English co-sponsored workshops relating research on child language development to language arts curriculum in the schools. By capitalizing on what learners know, these workshops proposed that educators nurture positive encounters with print much the same as parents facilitate early oral language growth. Based on the belief that good teachers are perceptive observers of children, each session also produced a training and sharing period termed "kid-watching" (Goodman, 1978). As the name suggests, the objective of this experience was to provide teachers with the opportunity to exchange their observations of children's live or videotaped reading and of particular writing samples. The conference participants' child-centered experience is indicative of a significant trend in research methodology in the field of reading.

The case study is a similar, more formalized methodology which has frequently been used in language acquisition research and which is gaining popularity in reading research (Bissex, 1980; Baghban, 1979; Andrews, 1976; McKenzie, 1974). This type of naturalistic inquiry relies on observations of few children by trained researchers. In fact, the Annual Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading (July 1, 1979 to June 30, 1980, p. viii) notes an increase in the number of intensive studies of individual subjects,

so much so that the study of one child is no longer suspect or even unusual. The concentration on the individual has also produced an informative classroom technique for analyzing a child's ability to handle print.

The Reading Miscue Inventory focuses on the kinds of interpretations a person makes when reading. A teacher tape-records a pupil's oral reading and compares the version on tape to that of the written text. The resulting pupil profile indicates patterns of strengths and weaknesses on which an instructional program may be based. The growing body of theoretical knowledge evolving from miscue analysis conducted by researchers (Goodman, 1979) is impacting the standard definition of "the good reader". The very term "miscue" as opposed to "mistake" underscores differences in the reader's interpretation of the author's intent rather than rigid judgments about accuracy. Therefore, the good reader is one who successfully uses the cues in print and matches personal experiences and world view to those of the author in order to predict the intended meaning.

Reflecting a similar point of view, schema theory assumes that a spoken or written passage does not in itself carry meaning, but rather provides directions for listeners or readers as to how they should reconstruct the intended meaning (Hacker, 1980). In particular, the refinement of the story schema as it develops in children who have been exposed to a rich oral tradition or who have had books read to them is considered crucial for the prediction in reading and listening and for the composition inherent in writing and speaking (Brown, 1977; Applebee, 1978). Teaching reading through storybooks (Butler and Clay, 1979) and encouraging children to make books in the classroom (D'Angelo, 1981; and Shea, 1981) are two of the many conspicuous examples of reading activities which support the theoretical implications of current language arts research.

The developing story schema is further refined through the type of materials selected for reading. Predictable books such as the folktale The Three Little Pigs, Margaret Wise Brown's The Runaway Bunny, and Tolstoy's The Great Big Enormous Turnip demonstrate formulaic content expressed in repetitive syntactic patterns. Their stories are self-contained units, unlike natural science texts which have self-contained pages as units. Since the ease with which we handle print depends on the extent to which the materials match our previous experiences and our model of language, the use of predictable reading materials at school and at home promotes literacy by helping readers make this match as quickly and as easily as possible.

The language experience approach in which the teacher acts as a student's scribe also proves successful because it avoids the mismatch between spoken and written language patterns, provided the adult maintains the integrity of the child's language when recording. Since the successful reader has a model of language in which the oral components support the written and vice versa (while maintaining relevance to understandings of the world), lan-

guage experience destines learners to find a place for literacy in their lives.

What I can think about, I can talk about.  
 What I can say, I can write (or someone can write for me),  
 What I can write, I can read (and others can read too),  
 I can read what I have written, and I can also read what  
 other people have written for me to read (Lee and Allen,  
 1963).

Although every example of print is not necessarily first spoken, teachers find language experience activities valid in themselves for promoting an integrated language model and as necessary supplements to phonics programs. As learners become their own scribes, they continue to compose according to their developing theory of the world.

Writing is in fact gaining emphasis as a support system for the reading process. Research in developmental writing demonstrates that early readers are usually early writers (Durkin, 1966; Clay, 1977), and that early writers spell according to phonological generalizations they make about the language they speak (Read, 1971; Gentry, 1981). First and second grade teachers are learning to read invented spellings for the messages the students convey, and to expect visual spellings as student reading competence increases. When teachers focus on student messages, they can cultivate in students the concept of audience awareness. Moreover, the concept of a contract between the reader and writer results in better readers and writers (Tierney and LaZansky, 1980). Given appropriate opportunities, learners are demonstrating that they know a great deal about language and how language works. Sentence-combining proves to be a successful technique for capitalizing on learners' intuitive knowledge of language. By reading combinations of short sentences, students develop awareness of variability in written language which results in more sophisticated writing styles. Awareness of language and style are also refined in the conference approach to writing which treats a written product as unfinished and developing through reading with peers, teachers, and oneself, editing, and rewriting (Graves, 1980). The Bay Area Writing Project and its subsequent state writing projects continually emphasize the need for more writing in the classrooms by both students and teachers, and recommend that writers share by reading aloud what they have written (Moffett, 1979). Apparently teachers are taking such advice to relate writing and reading within a total communicative model.

In summary, the kid-watching, the model of the successful reader, the story schema, predictable materials, language experience, and supportive writing are indicators of the return to common sense in reading education. Two well-known axioms permeate the aspects of language learning discussed: "Begin where the child is" and "Teach to the strengths of the child." We all have life experiences, and while these experiences may not match middle class expectations, an understanding gained through observation, reading and writing samples, and the recordings of stories shows

the strategies with which learners come to school. If we learn based on what we already know, then this point is where to begin each child's educational program, and because experience is the great leveler in learning, we provide numerous and varied experiences through our classrooms which all our children share and on which all our children may build.

The classroom teacher these days is caught in the bind between process-competence and product-performance approaches. Teachers often express that what they believe they must do is not working, but they are afraid to do anything differently. Life in America changes quickly and grows more complex. Daily we face explosions of knowledge in the society at large, yet "...we still try to use the 'factory' scheme of age-graded classes that Horace Mann popularized, though it never did work well" (Hart, 1981, p. 444). The system was designed for rote, product-learning and has not changed. Teachers, under pressure from schedules, lesson plans, principals, and parents, race from worksheet to multiple-choice test to remediation, complaining that a principal faced with the choice of supporting a teacher or a parent will now more often support the parent. When individuals feel they are sinking in quicksand, accountability can have no meaning. Case histories of teacher burnout are accumulating at a frightening rate.

We have fractionalized the field of reading into reading versus reading skills. While both approaches may claim to aim at the attainment of meaning, "Reading comprehension can reliably be tested as one skill only; the testing of smaller elements is not only counter productive but generally unreliable" (Pearson, 1980, p. 30). Good readers can score low on standardized tests and poor readers who are testwise often do very well. How many of us crammed for exams to get degrees only to forget the information the day after the exam? How many of us now require pupils to learn 20 spelling words by Friday? If we continue to give lists of 20 words, our pupils will know only these 20 words and probably for only 48 hours. With a new perspective, even within our old time frame, we can affect the ways of thinking of our students. As a single example, if we teach spelling according to families of words, we equip students to handle the words they need for the rest of their lives (Chomsky, 1970). And a process orientation accomplishes one more marvelous achievement. The relevance and joy which motivated oral language development becomes obvious in the acquisition of literacy. Good teachers need to be like good parents. We provide experiences that promote problem-solving and growth, but the learner has the ultimate responsibility for the integration of old and new information in order to handle experiences that come along in life. Our job is to foster independent, creative learners who are able to enjoy the composing that goes with speaking and writing as well as the understanding that accompanies listening and reading. For these are the human beings who are going to one day assume our roles as teachers and parents. Let us continue to aim at their humanity. Such a target inherently includes their competence.

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# SECONDARY READING: A CONCERN OF THE PAST, A TREND OF THE PRESENT, A DEMAND OF THE FUTURE

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"The heart of their problem as a class was the simple skill of reading. There were four kids who couldn't read their own names, three or four who couldn't read anything else, and the rest of the class who could read a little but were always shaky about it ... they couldn't admit not knowing how to read and so they couldn't ever begin to learn, because in order to learn they'd have to begin, right there in class, with simplicities, easily identified by all as 'learning to read,' and open themselves up to scorn. Nothing doing. On the other hand, everything we were supposed to be doing in class presupposed that everybody could read ... If you couldn't read the printed word, what could you do?"

—James Herndon, The Way It Spozed to Be, page 91.

Educators have been concerned with the problem of reading at the secondary level for decades. It is the purpose of this paper to trace the manifestations of that concern and to provide insight into the current and future status of secondary reading instruction.

Not until the late 1920s and early 30s did teachers begin to test and measure reading ability, and that effort to quantify reading competency was accompanied by the emergence of the first silent-reading high school textbooks. Practitioners were not united regarding what to do about the secondary school student who could not read well. Illustrative of the confusion within the profession was an article published in 1929, entitled "Shall Instruction be Given?" Indeed, the predominant resource for secondary teachers wishing to improve their students' reading capabilities was contemporary books on elementary reading.

During the forties teachers were still seeking methods to help remedial readers. Simplified textbooks made their first appearance on the curricular market, and the first bona fide text for teachers—Developmental Reading in the High School (1941) also appeared. The problem of young adults who were unable to read satisfactorily was brought to the attention of the American public when over one million draftees were rejected for service in World War II on the basis of functional illiteracy.

The fifties brought some help for the poor reader in the

nation's high schools. Unfortunately, that help came in the form of an extra course in English, with the English teacher bearing the primary responsibility for any and all remedial instruction. A 1952 article entitled "How Can the Poor Reader in the Secondary School Be Rescued?", illustrates the scope of the problem and the attitudes of practitioners regarding its solution.

The 1960s brought attention to such topics as the relationship between reading and self-esteem, the whole notion of readability and its measurement, programmed instruction, and the cloze procedure both as a testing and a teaching technique. Amid all of this activity in the professional literature, the poor reader in the high school was still receiving the majority of his remedial instruction in his English class, if any at all was offered.

#### Inadequate Reading in the '70s

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (1970-80) revealed that 13 year-olds had gained slightly in literal comprehension, while 17 year-olds had declined in the inferential aspect of comprehension. Perhaps these findings reflect the increasing tendency of classroom teachers to ask literal questions rather than higher level of comprehension questions (Prosser 1978; Andre 1977). There is a renewed concern that adolescents still are not learning to read very well. That concern is being answered by the influx of more simplified textbooks in all content areas—books that, in essence, bring the level of the reading material down to the level of the students. That such a tactic may do a disservice to the poor reader in high school is suggested in the literature (Maxwell 1978; Miller 1979; Hettinger 1980).

Another response to the fact that adolescent reading competence is less than adequate is the increased emphasis on teaching students not how to read better, but rather how to cope with the real world, upon communication skills that will benefit them in everyday life—on "survival skills".

Clearly, America is reading less competently than earlier generations. In the 1971 Gallup Poll, only 26% of the respondents indicated that they had read a hardcover or paperback book (not counting the Bible or textbooks) in the past month. Gallup Poll findings of 1974 indicated that 46% of those polled selected television as a spare time activity, whereas only 27% chose reading. The response of even the United States Navy to substandard reading skills of recruits has been to rewrite its training manual in a lower, more easily readable style.

#### Today and Tomorrow

The 1980s bring some refreshingly healthy trends to the problem of high school reading deficiencies. Administrators are being asked by school boards to implement school-wide reading programs. Parents are demanding a back-to-basics approach to learning and are becoming increasingly involved in their children's reading, according to a 1980 Gallup Poll. Content area teachers are receiving in-service training in comprehension and vocabulary development techniques and in the integration of reading strategies with content mastery.

What lies ahead for the poor reader in the high school classroom? Certainly survival skills will continue to be taught, along with such competencies as following directions, active listening, and critical thinking. Although they do not constitute a panacea for the problem of reading in the secondary school, simplified textbooks of the high-interest, low-vocabulary sort have flooded the curricular market and are here to stay. Students will do more and more magazine and paperback book reading, so the role of the teachers may well be to guide that reading to its maximum benefit. The Reading Specialist will do less work with individual students, finding herself in the classroom, working with subject matter teachers to improve the reading competence of whole classes of students. Teachers will be encouraged and urged, if not required, to take university courses in secondary reading. Then the problem of the high school student who cannot read well may be met head-on instead of skirted or bypassed.

Certainly the influence of the computer in classrooms of the future cannot be denied. Already computers are used to diagnose reading problems, prescribe remediation, to generate word lists, record language-experience stories, to model the reading process, to create motivational games, simulate informal reading inventories, expedite reading research, generate tests from item banks, and translate print into braille.

Research continues to show that no one piece of gadgetry nor any one instructional method will ensure reading success. Teacher effectiveness studies indicate that students want teachers who know their material and teach it with mastery (Ruddell 1981). The answer to the demand for reading competence in the high school surely lies in teachers attuned to the problem and prepared to confront it.

"We ain't learning anything, Mr. Herndon. Why don't you teach us nothing? You spozed to teach us that book!"

Herndon, page 96

Teacher preparation institutions must teach potential teachers how to teach any book in any content area. Practicing high school teachers must be instructed in methods they can use today, right now, to improve the reading competence of their students. We as educators are presently operating in just such a mode, and certainly we will continue, for that is as it should be, if we are to meet the unique demand of the high school student who cannot read adequately.

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# INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING A READING FOR MEANING APPROACH

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In recent years reading educators have increasingly recognized that the reading process involves the reader's active construction of meaning from printed text. As such, reading is viewed as a complex cognitive and linguistic process. The reader's knowledge of the world and the reader's knowledge of language (including the graphophonemic, semantic, and syntactic systems) interact and provide cues to meaning as the reader deals with the printed page (Goodman 1969; Rumelhart & Ortony 1977; Smith 1979 & 1982).

Smith (1975) states that the child applies the same basic skills in learning to read as have been applied before coming to school in learning to master language and to make sense of the world. Goodman (1970) has referred to reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game; "one that requires strategies of sampling, predicting, confirming or rejecting, and integrating in order to gain meaning from the printed page." Such strategies are cognitive functions being applied by the reader to a language situation. Blachowicz (1978) writes that current studies suggest a constructive view of the reading process, one which "stresses the reader's contribution to the text..." The reader does not simply interpret the text but brings his or her meaning to it.

These sources suggest that, from the beginning of reading instruction, the gaining of meaning and the use of context that is meaningful to the student should be emphasized. Many instructional practices, however, are inconsistent with such a psycholinguistic view of the reading process. The beginning reader is often regarded as a blank slate, without language competency, and is exposed to a reading program, and to consequent evaluation procedures, based on the abstract, isolated parts of language (e.g., letters, consonant sounds, vowel sounds, isolated words). This "taking apart" makes reading more difficult, as it requires the student to focus on parts of language not isolated in natural speech and then integrate these parts into meaningful wholes—a complex cognitive process. To compound matters, such an approach often makes it impossible for the student to use cognitive cues (his or her knowledge of the world) when "reading" as there is little or no meaning involved in the instructional activities or, perhaps, no meaning the student can attach to his or her own world experience.

If our goal as reading educators is to develop in students the ability to gain meaning from written language, our instruction and programs should present and emphasize experiences which promote this ability. The following is a listing of practical suggestions for implementing a reading for meaning approach:

#### Provide real reading experiences

- Stock classrooms with a wealth of meaningful and interesting books, magazines, newspapers.
- Include time each day for "real" reading activities—students learn to read by reading.
- Read aloud to students each day.
- Use read-a-long activities.
- Use assisted reading activities (Reader reads a sentence, then student reads it. Reader reads, pausing to leave out highly meaningful words. Student provides these words. Reader and student read together, in unison.)

#### Use the language experience approach

- Integrate the language arts by combining reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities.
- Remember that listening and speaking are primary to the development of reading and writing.
- Don't separate reading and writing instruction—use each to reinforce the other.
- See Van Allen 1972, and Moffett & Wagner 1976, for description of the language experience approach.
- Use the LEIR (Language Experiences in Reading, Encyclopedia Britannica 1974) and Interaction (Houghton Mifflin 1973) programs for language experience activities, materials.
- Place student-made books in the classroom library or reading center. Make multiple copies of these books for students to share and read together.
- Weave skill instruction into students' language experience activities.

#### Base Instruction on meaning

- Use context (not isolated sounds or words) in practice exercises, games, workbook pages, etc.
- Encourage "risk-taking" when students read. Provide support for the making of predictions, or educated guesses, as to what would "come next" or "make sense" in the sentence, paragraph, or story.
- Emphasize use of the beginning sound of a word plus context as a basic strategy to predict what would "come next" or "make sense."
- Use cloze exercises to develop the use of context cues. Variations of cloze activities include: "free" cloze (no cues other than context are given), cloze with word banks, and use of beginning word clues in cloze blanks.
- Develop sight vocabulary through activities using context. Do not use isolated words on word cards or lists for instruction.

Tape students reading aloud. Have them listen to the tape, finding the words and phrases they read without meaning. Have students supply words that would make sense.

Use evaluation techniques which stress reading as a meaning-getting process

Listen to students read.

Take time to ask questions about what students read, and discuss these answers.

Use silent and oral reading inventories and/or miscue analysis.

Use students' writing as diagnostic information about students' language growth.

Don't over-rely on basic skills tests.

Look for strengths as well as weaknesses. Build on these strengths.

Use reading for meaning strategies for reading "problems"

Remember the student having difficulties needs the most meaningful activities and materials.

When a reader makes reversals, stress that reading must make sense. "Was" is not as likely to be read as "saw" if materials have meaning for the student, and if reading for meaning is being emphasized. Ask students if given responses "make sense." The language experience approach will help here.

When a reader meets an unknown word, do not have the reader "sound it out" as a first technique. Have the reader predict what word or words might come next and then check this prediction by asking "Does this make sense?" and/or looking closely at the word. Encourage parents to use this same approach with students during at-home reading.

When a reader "miscues," do not stop and correct the reader —allow the reader to complete the sentence or phrase and see if s/he self-corrects. If meaning is not lost, ignore the miscue. If meaning is lost and there is no self-correction, ask the reader if what was read made sense. Guide the reader in strategies to gain meaning. Encourage parents to use this same approach when reading with students at home.

If a reader is hesitant to try to read unknown words, provide an accepting environment and use games or other activities that require "guessing" in non-reading situations. Then, discuss making "educated guesses" with students and transfer to activities requiring "guessing" in reading situations.

Recognize that reading will be easier if the reader has had direct experience with the content of the material to be read. Make the classroom a "real" place for learning where students are actively involved with language and the world through activities that go beyond textbooks or basal readers.

The above suggestions are offered as practical ways in which our instructional programs can focus on developing the ability



to gain meaning from written language. We cannot expect students to develop this ability without presenting and emphasizing experiences that allow and encourage students to use their knowledge of the world and of language as they encounter written text.

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# THE READING SPECIALIST AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

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Frequently, the remedial or developmental reading teacher at the secondary level functions as the content-area reading specialist. In this capacity the specialist works with content-area teachers, presenting reading ideas, solving reading problems, and involving content-area teachers in the change model. However, before any interaction occurs between the specialist and the content-area teacher, the reading specialist must attain these two objectives:

1. Be invited into the classroom by the teacher rather than enter with a mandate from the principal; and
2. Work successfully with the teacher to perform the job properly and to achieve professional goals.

Achieving such goals is complicated by personal idiosyncracies and individual work situations. For example, many teachers feel threatened and become defensive (Cross, 1978) when another professional, especially another teacher or administrator, visits the classroom to observe and advise. Further, many teachers experience difficulty as they attempt to change their concepts and methods of teaching; they desire to maintain the status quo because they feel comfortable with it (Herber, 1970). The reading specialist and/or the administrator—responsive to the concerns of content-area teachers—can alleviate, possibly eliminate, negative teacher reactions and, concomitantly, attain the desired goals by effecting three basic steps in the change model (Solomon, 1977). Through these steps, the reading specialist can bring innovative reading methods to the teaching of specific content.

## THE CHANGE MODEL

1. Unfreeze specific concepts held by teachers in the building.

Such concepts may concern methods of teaching, content matter, or factors that affect good teaching. Unfreezing these concepts is best done by a convincing demonstration of the need for change. Example: Conduct an experiment with a teacher where key vocabulary words are pretaught an experimental group, and not pretaught a control group before a reading assignment. Many study show that the group that covered the vocabulary words before reading will comprehend the material better. Such an effective demonstration

will help create a readiness for change in the teacher.

2. Change the concept. Demonstrate sound educational practices that would work better than would the teacher's original concept. Example: Introduce the Directed Reading Activity (DRA) that, in the first step, reviews important and unfamiliar vocabulary before the actual reading. Thus, the teacher may be induced to incorporate the other DRA steps into the teaching or content. The Structured Overview could also be introduced at this point.

3. Refreeze the concept. The concept is reinforced because it is efficient and practical and produces significantly better short and long-term results for both teacher and learner. Example: The students tell the teacher that they understood the chapter content because of their pre-reading review of vocabulary. The teacher feels good about overcoming a learning barrier and is pleased with the comprehension scores.

#### CONCERNS

Most reading authorities agree that the overall goal of the content-area specialist is to instruct teachers about reading and, in turn, have them teach their students how to read in the particular disciplines, encouraging them to do so regularly (Herber 1970, Robinson 1975, Estes and Vaughan 1978, Vacca 1981). Some teachers possess conscious knowledge of the reading process. It is the reading specialist's responsibility to create awareness in teachers of the language processing that they themselves use and to convey to teachers an understanding of their students' abilities and needs so that the students can process the language of the content areas.

Because many teachers are concerned with covering content, it is often difficult to persuade them of the existence of numerous aspects of content-field language that teachers are best qualified to teach (Cramer 1978). Yet, if they can teach reading processes and cover content concurrently, the effort will probably result in improved reading comprehension and overall learning for students. However, the need for such simultaneous effort appears to be extra effort, and is frequently a difficult concept to "sell" to many teachers. They resent the idea that 'every teacher is a teacher of reading.' Using the Change Model, though, the reading specialist can enable most teachers to see the necessity of teaching reading and content at the same time.

#### UNFREEZE

To work with teachers, the reading specialist must be invited into the classroom. The specialist can accomplish this by doing casual front work, or advance preparation, including the following:

1. Indication of a personal interest in, or reading about the content area;
2. Indication of innovative ways to practice a content-area skill, using specific examples;
3. Offers to team teach; and
4. Demonstration of interest in specific textbooks and/or parts of the curriculum.

By initiating conversations about reading, the specialist provides teachers with time to discern reading problems in their students and perhaps to reflect on reading and study skills techniques the teachers, themselves, use. Oftentimes, this teacher self-analysis creates an excellent climate for change. Consequently, teachers might unfreeze several concepts or attitudes preparatory to working with the reading specialist, and begin to accept the idea of the specialist's presence in the classroom.

The risk of making teachers feel threatened can be avoided if the specialist determines that teachers are ready to work with the specialist. After this has been determined, an initial visit may be arranged. During this time, the specialist may show in behavior the willingness and warmth that promote good feelings and generate an atmosphere of cooperation. Make encouraging gestures—a nod of the head, periodic eye contact, an occasional smile—that indicate attention and approval and that put the teacher more at ease. Even though there might be ideas or methods with which the specialist doesn't agree, there must be an attitude of approval in the environment of this initial visit.

As the specialist leaves the room s/he should talk briefly with the teacher, providing positive comments about certain aspects of the reading such as the material or a technique. Above all, the specialist must avoid intimidating the teacher by assuming the role of critic or evaluator. As Cross (1978, p. 441) says:

Our ego resides in those characteristics we really value about ourselves. For instance, you might describe your working self by some of the following adjectives: creative, reliable, tolerant, responsible, innovative and undoubtedly many others. Now, to strike a defensive reaction in you all that has to be done is to challenge at least one of these valued qualities.

And, after all, teaching is a field in which one's ego lies not far from the actual performance. Therefore, criticism in any form can be taken personally.

#### CHANGE

Following observation in the content classroom, the reading specialist should have some guidelines for working with the teacher. The teacher may need assistance with problems or seek advice on reading methods. Thus, it is important to have a teacher-specialist planning session before actual work in the classroom begins.

After identification of a reading problem or area of concern, the content-area specialist must find reading strategies that might work and that might be used by the classroom teacher. After these strategies have been carefully thought out, it is essential that they be presented attractively and that the rationale or theory behind the concept be provided in the planning session so that the general idea is adaptable to other specific material. It is essential, also, that strategies and methods be presented honestly. For example, if a readability formula is used, its lack of complete reliability and other drawbacks should be pointed out.

During this planning time, the specialist must make an effort to have ideas and suggestions well-received and to demonstrate techniques in the content-area teacher's classroom to help bring about change. After the specialist leaves, the teacher must teach the lesson and the reading strategy to the students without the specialist's help. The effectiveness of the reading specialist can be gauged by the degree of independent implementation of reading skills which the content area teacher retains after working together on a particular skill.

#### COMMUNICATE

For the reading specialist, communication skills are extremely important for effectuating the Change Model. Careful listening is essential to realize exactly what concerns the teacher has and to perceive when help is sought. Often, casual but subtle comments are pleas for assistance (St. John 1978). Because the specialist's job takes one through the full range of academic subjects and because s/he does not usually possess the subject mastery of the teachers, the specialist must listen carefully.

Two skills that will help the specialist communicate better with other teachers include: 1) paraphrasing, and 2) feedback (Cross 1978, St. John 1978). Paraphrase to clarify ideas. The specialist may ask, "Are you saying...?" and repeat an idea so that the specialist and the content area teacher both understand an idea clearly and accurately. To make a point or to emphasize an issue, the specialist should feed back reactions and reasons for them to the other person. Colleagues respect honestly stated feelings that have supporting rationale (Cross 1978). Use of paraphrasing and feedback strengthens the specialist's knowledge of the content-area teacher's objectives and also serves to openly convey the specialist's ideas and concerns to the teacher.

Working with a small group of teachers or with a department is more difficult than is working with individuals. MacKenzie (1979) offers seventeen ideas to make group work productive and to lessen tension. Vacca & Vacca (1980) suggest several methods to unfreeze teachers who resist change. The specialist, implementing these ideas or similar ones, will handle better the broad spectrum of teacher attitudes ranging from advocacy to dissension. The specialist, as s/he works with group members, will perceive that time is more profitably spent with teachers willing to try what the specialist proposes. Still, the content-area specialist must be patient with those who are critical because some teachers do not accept nor understand new ideas immediately (Usova 1978).

#### REFREEZE

Change occurs as the specialist works effectively and convincingly with the teacher in the planning sessions prior to the actual classroom work. Refreezing is accomplished when the strategies for reading and the methods for teaching them work well for the particular teacher. In other words, the marriage of content and reading skills will lead to a more effective product/process ratio, and the teacher feels that the students are saving time as they comprehend more of what they read. Throughout the inter-

facings between the specialist and the content-area teacher, and between teacher and students, a good feeling tone should prevail (Hunter 1975).

#### SUPPORT

Reading authorities concur that the administrator is the key to an effective content-area reading program. Therefore, the administrator can assist or impede the specialist's efforts to instruct teachers in the application of reading strategies. A supportive administrator can further the implementation of the Change Model. However, even though an administrator supports the efforts of a reading specialist, the specialist probably will do well to 'lobby' with the administrator in order to gain not only his/her support but also his/her active cooperation in the content-area reading program. A recent study (Moore 1980) indicates that content-area teachers perceive the need for the principal to be actively involved in staff development.

#### CONCLUSION

The reading specialist who accepts the challenge of change in his/her school needs a perspective and a generous time frame to attain long-term change goals. However, through positive contact with classroom teachers, through effective communication skills, with the active support of administrators, and through application of the Change Model, the specialist can strengthen his/her duties of teaching students to read more effectively and efficiently in school.

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# CURRENT READING RESEARCH: WHAT DOES IT TELL THE CLASSROOM TEACHER?

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## Introduction

Teachers often consider research as an entity separate from classroom practices. However, if one looks carefully at research results, implications that have a direct bearing on classroom practices can be found.

In the field of reading, there is a growing abundance of research results which can affect what is done in the classroom. It is the purpose of this article to present an brief overview of current research done in reading and point out some implications for classroom reading teachers. Standal (1978) descriptive model of reading is used as a framework in which to present the research. Standal's components of reading include physiology, phonology, understanding and learning.

## Physiology

Standal's physiology component refers to the actual physical processes that occur in the eye and brain during reading; it is difficult to describe this component in any detail since the internal eye/brain interaction is not fully understood. This component of reading is recognized as a first stage in the reading process; yet physiology is a vastly underexplored territory. McConkie and Raynor (1976) explored this area by examining the eye's limit and span in reading.

They found that the eye can fixate on 4-6 letters on either side of the fixation point and up to 2-3 letters vertically. They offer three possible elements that may guide the reader; (1) a constant pattern explanation—a rhythmic eye movement pattern; (2) stimulus control—feature of the text, and (3) internal control—sources within the mind. Even though McConkie and Raynor do not venture a guess as to what the internal control sources are, they do recognize the presence of some unobservable process which occurs within the brain during the initial reading phase. Furthermore, they suggest the peripheral vision may be the element that provides for guessing and predicting words in the reading act.

In sum, the physiological aspect of the reading process remain ambiguous. However, the hypotheses suggested by McConkie and Raynor provide some input to this initial stage of reading.

### Phonology

The phonological component of Standal's model of reading contains the grapheme-phoneme relationship; this component refers mainly to the sounds of our language which the reader may recode into graphemes.

Before a reader can engage in phonological processes and the subsequent components of reading s/he must attend to the task of reading. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) suggest that readers can attend to only one task at a time but that readers can alternate attention between two or more tasks and attend to a second task if the first one has been learned to automaticity. Thus, they propose an "automaticity" model in which the reader begins the reading process by first attending to the physical attributes of graphemes. The reader must then make an association between the graphemes and phonemes. Once this process, the grapheme-phoneme association, becomes automatic the reader can be free to attend to other tasks.

Venesky's (1976) research also pertains to the phonological component of reading. Simply put, Venesky defines reading as the translation process from spelling to sound. He advocates that our orthographic system is not as unusual or full of exceptions as one might think. Spelling rules, according to Venesky, should be based on functional spelling units and phonological units. The task of the reader is simply to relate orthographic patterns to existing phonological habits. His model is somewhat developmental in nature and describes a relationship between spelling units and sounds.

Another researcher whose work is applicable to the phonological component of reading is Gillooly (1973). He studied the effects of TWS (transitional writing systems; i.e., one grapheme to one phoneme) versus T.O. (traditional orthography) on the reading abilities of initial and intermediate-aged readers. The results of Gillooly's study indicate that although TWS seems beneficial to initial readers in word recognition, T.O. seems to be optimal for learning to read. In short, altering our writing system does not appear to be beneficial or desirable.

In summary, the grapheme-phoneme correspondence appears to hold a place in the reading process. Gillooly's research states that a perfect 1 : 1 grapheme-phoneme correspondence is not a viable way of improving reading proficiency in either rate or comprehension. Venesky poses possible steps which a reader passes through when attempting to associate a phoneme to a grapheme using orthographic rules. It is not clear how phonology contributes to the comprehension aspect of reading but it does appear to be a prerequisite to decoding and, thus, to understanding.

### Understanding

The understanding component refers to the language of the reader. If the reader understands the language of reading s/he has then passed through this stage. According to Standal, the act of understanding language in reading can be analyzed in terms



of three subcomponents; semantics—the meaning which the words make reference to, syntax—the particular physical structure and order of a language, and experience—the prior knowledge that a reader possesses which serves as a reservoir or bank to draw upon when reading.

### Semantics

There are several interesting models of reading which describe the way in which meaning is derived from the graphic representation of a word. According to LaBerge and Samuels' (1974) theoretical model, the semantic meaning of a word can be obtained directly from phonological word processing. In fact, according to LaBerge and Samuels, once a word is recoded phonologically, a child makes a connection to his/her oral language, thereby determining the semantic component of a given word. Likewise, Frank Smith (1971) in his "immediate word recognition" model suggests that the word meaning can be directly obtained from the distinctive features of a word.

In a model proposed by Gough (1972), it is a hypothetical character named "Merlin" who is responsible for the syntactic and the semantic rules of our language. Gough bases his model on the assumption that letter-by-letter processing occurs in the primary memory and that the reader must process the information very quickly in order to progress from serial processing to parallel processing. According to Gough, if it takes too long to read a given word the content (semantics) of the preceding words will be lost from the primary memory; thus, comprehension will not occur. For this reason, then, Gough suggests that beginning readers learn to read faster.

Others (Frank Smith, 1971; Kenneth Goodman, 1967) advocate a prediction and hypothesis-formation strategy of reading. They perceive reading as an act in which the reader is constantly formulating hypotheses, then through the rejection or confirmation of these hypotheses, the reader obtains meaning. Gough, however, states that readers should not engage in guessing, "The good readers need not guess; the bad should not." (page 532)

McConkie and Raynor, Gough, and LaBerge and Samuels perceive reading as a word-by-word, letter-by-letter, and text-driven process; the reader is a plodder who guesses only because he/she did not decode the word rapidly enough to get the correct word. Contrarily, Smith and Goodman view reading as a holistic, concept-driven process.

Still others (Pearson and Studdt, 1975) note the importance of context and word frequency in the semantic component of reading. Chomsky (1972) suggests that there may be a developmental sequence in the acquisition of certain syntactical structures; furthermore, the particular way a child interprets any given syntactic structure will indeed affect his/her semantic understanding of the syntactic structure. Even though the various semantic models of reading differ from one another, one factor is consistent; semantics is a major contributor to the understanding aspect of the reading process. Where semantics end and syntax begins is difficult to

say since the two are so tightly bound.

### Syntax

The syntactical structures of sentences were examined by Pearson (1974-75). He found that students prefer longer, more complex sentences and cue-present sentences to shorter ones with no cue. When asked to answer a question, students nearly always answered with a cue present. As for recall, Pearson states, "In order to store a causal relation the subject virtually cannot help but to store it in a unified subordinated chunk." (p. 187) Pearson's results provide evidence for the "chunk" model in reading, in which primacy is given to semantic chunks rather than syntactic chunks. In other words, reduction of the number of subordinating constructs and/or the length of a sentence will not necessarily result in better understanding because complex sentences may carry more semantic information.

Guthrie and Tyler (1976) also examined effects of semantic and syntactic structures on the ability of good and poor readers to recall sentences. Their results indicate that meaningful sentences are easier to recall than are anomolous one, which are easier to recall than random strings of words. Guthrie and Tyler conclude that low comprehension is due to incomplete decoding during silent reading.

Another study which examined the effects of syntax on reading was conducted by Isakson and Miller (1976). They conclude that high-comprehenders are more sensitive to syntactic and semantic constraints than are low-comprehenders. Furthermore, once words are recognized, the use of language structure may determine comprehension.

In conclusion, each of the aforementioned studies indicate that both syntax and semantics contribute to the understanding of reading and that both are probably closely related to one another if not in fact intertwined. Whether it be labeled "Merlin" or "automaticity" some function in our brain utilizes syntax and semantics as a cue to learning during the reading process.

### Experience

Another component in the understanding of reading is the experience component. According to Standal, this component is made up of prior knowledge, attitudes, and feelings.

Matthewson (1976) proposes an affective model for reading which incorporates interest, attitude, attention, comprehension, and motivation. As it relates to reading, Matthewson's model suggests that attitude can affect comprehension, attention, and the acceptance/rejection process. Matthewson presents four possible ways to change attitudes: (1) praise, (2) individualization, (3) achievement motivation, and (4) anxiety.

McDermott (1977) further emphasizes the importance of attitudes and experience on school learning. Rather than attempting to describe a model of attitudes as does Matthewson, McDermott attempted to find out why pariahs have the attitudes they do. His basic conclusion is that status is learned, and that a pariah

child achieves his/her status by school failure. In other words, a pariah child may learn how not to read, thereby using reading failure as a means of social achievement in his/her peer group.

One final element within the experience framework of the understanding component is individual differences. Each of us has different experiences in our background and these individual differences give each one of us a unique reservoir from which to draw meanings and associations. As noted by Wanat (1977), individual differences are probably important factors when considering comprehension.

In sum, the experience sub-component of understanding in reading includes several factors which can affect what each reader brings to the reading act. These encompass such diverse experiences as attitudes, feelings, prior knowledge, and individual preferences. Exactly how important these aspects are to the reading process is unknown, but they surely affect comprehension and interact in may indefinable ways.

### Learning

The final phase in Standal's descriptive reading process is the learning phase. Researchers appear to have studied the learning of reading in three ways; one is to observe the proficient reader, another is to observe the deficient reader, and the third is to compare the results of proficient readers to those of deficient readers.

Several researchers have made comparisons between the performance of good and poor readers (Pearson and Studdt, 1975; Guthrie and Tyler, 1976; Isakson and Miller, 1976; and Olshavsky, 1976). A myriad of conclusions have resulted from this research. Pearson and Studdt found that the use of context increases with age and that the use of context probably helps rather than hinders beginning readers. Guthrie and Tyler's results indicate that poor readers are incomplete decoders and thus their comprehension is low. Isakson and Miller's results say that high comprehenders are more sensitive to semantic and syntactic cues than are low comprehenders and that the use of "language structure" by the reader may determine comprehension. Olshavsky found that good and poor readers use similar strategies but that good readers use the strategies more often.

In some cases the learning or comprehension in reading may be purely developmental (Chomsky, Pearson), in other cases changes in the text may help comprehension (Pearson), and in yet other cases overlearning and automaticity may be needed (LaBerge and Samuels, Gough).

Whether meaning is obtained from the text or brought to the text by the reader is another factor relevant to the learning aspect of reading. Rystrom (1977) lucidly describes each position. One contingent believes that the text dictates the meaning to the readers; contrarily, the other contingent believes that the text means what the reader thinks it means and that it is the reader who more or less dictates his/her own meaning. In Rystrom's

"matrix" model, the reader combines information in the text with that of his/her own experiences and other stored information. If there is a match, he/she adds new information to his/her "grid" and continues to revamp the matrix.

Whether meaning is obtained primarily from the text or from the reader, it is obvious that both are absolute necessities and play a significant part in the reading process. Through competence in the understanding of reading, learning in reading can occur and the reader can actively build his/her reservoir of knowledge.

### Implications

The following implications are based on the aforementioned research.

1. Some readers (especially those with limited eye span) may benefit from exercises to increase eye span. These exercises may encourage phrase reading and chunking.
2. Certain grapheme-phoneme relationships and sight words learned to automaticity may free the reader to go on to encoding.
3. Students may learn to spell and read better if functional spelling units and phonological units are recognized.
4. At early stages in reading, students need to have examples and models depicting how reading works; i.e., how letters form words which are symbols for ideas and objects.
5. A 1 : 1 phoneme-grapheme writing system does not appear to facilitate the reading comprehension process.
6. Slow plodding may hamper a reader's comprehension. An over-dependence on absolute correct decoding may thus hinder the comprehension process.
7. Readers are aided by context clues and repetitions of words or concepts.
8. Reducing the number of words and subordinating constructs do not necessarily make sentences easier to understand.
9. Exercises designed to develop the relationship between semantics and syntax may benefit readers by helping them develop a keen awareness of language and its components.
10. Students need to be stimulated and highly motivated to read; therefore, a diversity of materials should be available in the classroom.
11. Parents and teachers need to promote a positive attitude toward reading by serving as role models.
12. Since students are unique in background and interests, materials must be available that students can relate to.
13. Context clues can help beginning readers as well as sophisticated readers.
14. Individualization may be necessary in some instances since some students may take longer than others to reach a certain stage in reading.

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# MODELING: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR TEACHING READING

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Research has identified specific conditions and times when a child will model the behavior of an adult (Osborn, 1977). Early studies on modeling focused on the youngster's imitation of parents (Miller and Dollard, 1941). Later, Bandura (1971) emphasized why modeling influences were important in everyday living. He stated that individuals need models who exemplify the patterns in their culture because most of overt behaviors are learned either deliberately or unconsciously by example. Using variables which could be related to modeling, Travers (1972) cited studies focusing on the sex of the model and the subject, the consequences that follow the model's behavior, the effects of reinforcement, and the newness or uncertainty of a situation.

A teacher who understands the principles of modeling can certainly apply this knowledge in the classroom. Bandura (1971) observed the relationship between modeling and teaching when he stated that in many cultures, the word for teach is "to show." Numerous observational and experimental studies confirm that pupils learn what a teacher is as well as what s/he says. Pupils absorb the teacher's attitudes, imitate his or her behavior, and reflect his or her moods. In other words, the teacher is the model figure providing the impetus for behavior. If the teacher is accepted, he or she becomes a model and is consciously imitated. If the teacher is not liked, pupils may still unconsciously absorb his or her manners and attitudes (Bernard, 1965).

Because children are more apt to model when they encounter an unfamiliar concept or different situation, modeling will probably be strongest at the beginning of the school year. However, there are principles of modeling that need to be considered daily.

## Modeling and Interest in Reading

Studies support the theory that children are more apt to read if they have a model to emulate. Parents in the home set an example for a child but later the teacher becomes a parent substitute and the model for identification. In general, intellectual curiosity and value of learning are modeled through the comments and behaviors of parents and teachers. More specifically, the enthusiasm and interest in reading is projected by the teacher in formal and informal ways. An example of an organized activity that integrates modeling and reading is Sustained Quiet Reading Time (SQUIRT), which can be used successfully at any grade level

with any ability grouping. Every day at a designated time all children and adults within the school building should do the same activity—read. The amount of time spent reading in each classroom varies, but increases as the children learn to concentrate on their reading. Even though a teacher may be tempted to grade papers or complete other tasks during this time, he/she must read to be a model to the children in the classroom; otherwise SQUIRT will not be effective (Cunningham, 1977). The personal interest of the teacher about reading will be modeled in the other activities and resources selected for teaching reading.

### Modeling and Questioning

A technique developed to improve student questioning through reading comprehension is the ReQuest, or Reciprocal Questioning procedure (Manzo, 1970). This strategy is based on the principle of modeling since the student is expected to imitate the teacher's questioning patterns. First, a selection should be read silently by both the teacher and student. Then the pupil is expected to ask the teacher questions; afterwards, the teacher asks the student appropriate questions. This procedure continues through several sentences. Manzo emphasizes that the child should be given direct or indirect reinforcement for modeling the teacher's questioning strategies.

Too often questions of teachers remain at the recognition, recall, or translation levels without progressing to the higher order of conjecture, explanation, and evaluation. Teachers need to learn these different levels of questions and how to incorporate them into the classroom. An approach which utilizes this hierarchy of questions to stimulate a child's thinking process is the Comprehension Question Response Model (Guszk, 1967). Effective modeling characteristics that might improve question asking include the following: (a) careful explanation of the relationship between the question and answer; (b) cooperation between children and teacher in working and questioning together on particular problems and activities; (c) honesty in answering student questions; (d) teaching students the various types of questions (Marksberry, 1979).

Hillerich (1979) contends that teachers should consider the need for poor readers to be exposed to higher level questions. Poor readers should not be automatically eliminated from instruction involving a variety of advanced thinking skills. Even these children are able to think critically and infer from their reading and listening, regardless of their diagnosed reading level. Questioning techniques, problem solving, demonstration, and discussion are strategies that should not be reserved for the better readers.

### Conclusion

The teacher's attitudes concerning reading will certainly be reflected in the instructional strategies and materials chosen for the classroom. Moreover, the approaches used for teaching reading are affected by the teacher who in turn influences the behavior and learning of the students. A conscientious teacher

will not neglect the responsibility he/she has as a model, no matter what teaching strategies are used. Whether the teacher is organizing the classroom, instructing, relating to students, or involved in any other activity, he/she is a "living example" who can inspire pupil behaviors in a positive (or negative) way. Teachers are able to teach, in part, through example because all children do imitate adults. Modeling is a powerful tool which has not yet been fully utilized in the teaching of reading.

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# AN INFORMAL READING— LANGUAGE TEST

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Professionals working with children who need help in language development and reading have reported a positive relationship between reading performance and the development of language skills (Mattingly, 1972; Goodman, reported in Gutknecht and Keenan, 1978; Berger, 1978; Semel and Wiig, 1975; Stark, 1975). Semel and Wiig (1975) report that many reading problems are due to a child's difficulty or inability to understand the ideas being expressed by complex syntactic structures, and Rupley (1974) states that problems in understanding the vocabulary used in reading texts may contribute to reading problems. The relationship and parallelism between reading and language development becomes more evident when considering some of the correlates that can have an effect on either or both of them: auditory or visual perceptual problems; motivation. Although such correlates are not synonymous with etiologies for poor developmental reading skills, they are conditions often accompanying an inability to read (Kirk, Kliehman and Lerner, 1978).

Harris and Sipay (1975) refer to reading as the meaningful interpretation of written or printed symbols. In order to get meaning from written words, the reader must understand the vocabulary and the sequence of ideas. Disabled readers often have trouble because they do not understand common lexical units or other linguistic elements. If a disabled reader is expected to read material and then answer questions, professionals should be aware of whether variables like poor word attack skills or lack of comprehension, or some combination of variables, account for the poor reading performance. To provide meaningful treatment it is necessary to specify the nature and degree of the problems.

Before expecting young children to learn how to read it should be determined whether they can comprehend what is read to them. The Informal Reading-Language Test was designed for this purpose. The stories selected for the Informal Reading-Language Test (See Figure 1) were ones Piaget (1959) used to measure the language skills of young children. They were selected because they were short, had a number of interrelated facts, and had plots of interest to young children. Story I, Epaminondas, (Piaget, 1959, p. 82) was changed in that the boy's name was shortened to Ep, to make it easier to pronounce. Story II, Niobe, was not changed.

## Story I (Ep)

Ep is a little boy and he lives in a country where it is very hot. His mother once said to him: "Go and take this shortbread cake to your granny, but don't break it." Ep put the shortbread under his arm, and when he got to his grandmother's the shortbread was in crumbs. His granny gave him a pat of butter to take back to his mother. This time Ep thought to himself: "I shall be very careful." And he put the pat of butter on his head. The sun was shining hard, and when he got home the butter was melted. "You are a silly," said his mother, "You should have put the butter in a leaf, then it would have arrived whole."

## Score Sheet

Ep - Story I	Pre	Post
1. A little boy	___	___
2. Lives in a hot country	___	___
3. Mother sends him to take shortbread cake	___	___
4. Cake arrives broken (in crumbs)	___	___
5. He had held it under his arm	___	___
6. His granny gives him some butter	___	___
7. Butter arrives melted	___	___
8. Because he put it on his head	___	___
9. Because it was very hot	___	___
1. What are crumbs?		
2. What's a pat of butter?		
3. What does melted mean?		
4. Why did the butter melt?		
5. Why did Ep put the butter on his head?		

## Story II (Niobe)

Once upon a time, there was a lady who was called Niobe, and who had 12 daughters and 12 sons. She met a fairy who had only one son and no daughter. Then the lady laughed at the fairy because the fairy only had one boy. They the fairy was very angry and fastened the lady to a

rock. The lady cried for ten years. In the end she turned into a rock, and her tears make a stream which still runs today.

## Score Sheet

Niobe - Story II	Pre	Post
1. Once there was a lady (or fairy, etc.)	___	___
2. She had children (provided they outnumber those of the other fairy)	___	___
3. She met a fairy (or girl, etc.)	___	___
4. This fairy had few children (or none at all, provided their number is inferior to the first lot)	___	___
5. The lady laughed at the fairy	___	___
6. Because the fairy had so few children	___	___
7. The fairy was angry	___	___
8. The fairy fastened the lady (to a rock, a tree, to the shore, etc.)	___	___
9. The lady cried	___	___
10. She turned into a rock	___	___
11. Her tears made a stream	___	___
12. Which flows to this day	___	___
1. Why was the fairy angry?		
2. Why did the lady cry?		
3. What turned into a rock?		
4. Tell me what a stream is.		
5. What's the difference between a daughter and a son?		

In order to determine how well children understand what is read to them, two types of tasks should be required. The first would be to relate the facts in sequential order. The second would be to answer specific questions about facts embedded in the stories.

For each story, Piaget (1959, p. 87) sequentially listed the facts he believed important. The list of facts became part of the scoring criteria for the test. Story I included nine statements and Story II included twelve.

Since language skills are presumed to affect reading skills, five questions were designed to measure a child's expressive skills. The questions related to vocabulary and facts embedded within each story. The questions were scored qualitatively to provide information about the semantic, morphological and syntactical language skills of children in primary grades. Each question was scored either three, two, one or zero, depending on the quality of the answer. Samples for each qualitative value were provided in the scoring criteria.\*

The scoring criterial consisted of two parts. In Part I points were earned by a student for retelling each story. One point was given for each relevant idea recalled regardless of the sequence. Another point was given for each idea that was sequenced correctly.

The possible score for the first section of the scoring criteria was 42, with Story I being worth 18 points and Story II being worth 24. In Part II each question was scored either a three, two, one or zero, according to the quality of the answer. Thus, it was possible to earn a score of 15 points for each set of questions accompanying the story or a total of 30 for both stories. The maximum score for the entire test was 72 points.

The test was administered to 32 kindergarten children in rural Nebraska. An item analysis was computed whereby the individual item scores were correlated with the total score of the test resulting in the subtotal scores shown in Table 1. For statistical purposes the test was divided into two parts. The first part was made up of the scores from the sequencing of ideas in retelling the stories. The second part consisted of the scores from the answers to the questions. The means, standard deviations, and alpha reliability coefficients for the scoring criteria are shown below.

Table 1  
Summary of the Subtotal Statistics  
for the Informal Reading-Language  
Test for 32 Kindergarten Children

Order of presentation	Mean	Standard deviation(SD)	Alpha reliability coefficients
Part I, Story I (Ep 18*)	6.84	4.02	.82
Part II, Story I (Ep 15*)	6.81	3.24	.61
Part I, Story II (Niobe 24*)	12.19	6.92	.90
Part II, Story II (Niobe 15*)	8.88	3.70	.63

\*Total possible

As can be noted, the alpha reliability coefficient for Part I on each story was higher than the correlation for Part II for each story. An alpha reliability coefficient of 0.92 was obtained for the total Informal Reading-Language Test. Since the test was designed to be given in its entirety, the lower correlation coefficient for Part II does not affect the test.

Interjudge reliability (Table 2) was determined by having three judges independently score 12 test protocols selected from 32 subjects at random. The coefficients for each of the four sections of the informal test indicate high internal consistency across the subsections.

The Informal Reading-Language Test was the result of cooperation among a Reading Specialist and two Speech-Language Pathologists who integrated their professional skills to assess listening comprehension for reading in primary grade children. It was determined that the test was easy to administer, the children found it interesting and attended to the tasks, it was administered in a brief amount of time and it provided information regarding

children's linguistic development. The interrater agreement among independent judges indicated that the directions for scoring the test and the scoring criteria were defined in a clear, descriptive, operational and reliable manner.

Table 2  
Average Intercorrelations among Three Judges  
for Scoring the Four Sections of the  
Informal Reading-Language Test  
(N = 12 kindergarten children)

Section of test	Average interrater correlation among three judges
Part I, Story I (Ep)	R = 0.87
Part II, Story I (Ep)	R = 0.88
Part I, Story II (Niobe)	R = 0.86
Part II, Story II (Niobe)	R = 0.88

After using the Informal Reading-Language Test the authors found that the last three facts in Story I were not listed in the order in which they appeared in the story; rather, the facts were listed in a cause-effect sequence. When the test was administered to kindergartners and second graders, it was found that the students were unable to determine the cause-effect relationship; therefore, the last three items were rearranged to occur in the order in which they appeared in the story.

The Informal Reading-Language Test is considered to be a screening test for reading readiness. Students that have difficulty in relating facts in sequential order when they are read a story often experience the same type of problem when they read to themselves. Poor performance on Part I of the Informal Reading-Language Test suggests a student may have difficulty in auditory memory and/or comprehension. Poor performance on Part II should be viewed as indicating that further analysis of the student's expressive language, receptive vocabulary and comprehension skills need to be made.

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