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RCTP

Reading Comprehension: Strategies for Instruction and Evaluation

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Reading Comprehension:

Strategies for Instruction and Evaluation

This monograph contains a brief overview of the fundamentals of reading comprehension, instructional strategies designed to increase reading comprehension, and techniques for evaluating comprehension.

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Overview: Instruction

Overview

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process requiring an intentional and thoughtful interaction between reader and text. Successful reading comprehension involves multiple, interdependent components. Kameenui and Simmons (1990) describe four components that contribute to the development of reading comprehension: (a) reader, (b) text, (c) strategies, and (d) tasks. By understanding the contribution of each component to the process of reading comprehension, teachers are better able to determine the most appropriate reading instruction for students.

Readers. Readers bring their own set of essential skills to the comprehension process. These skills constitute the readers' knowledge base. Kameenui and Simmons (1990) separate a reader's knowledge base into three categories: (a) background knowledge, (b) component skill knowledge, and (c) motivation. Background knowledge is the relevant knowledge a reader has prior to reading text and is cultivated through experience and exposure to rich vocabulary, language, printed materials and reading. Component skills include decoding and its pre-skills, vocabulary, knowledge of typographic features, word recognition skills, and literal skills. Finally, a reader's motivation to read and degree of interest in the material to be read will affect his or her comprehension.

Text. Educational text can be separated into two different types: narrative (storybook prose) and expository (textbook prose). Each type differs in purpose, requiring particular skills and affecting the type of comprehension instruction teachers should provide. Teaching students to understand narrative texts largely centers around teaching story grammar or text structure. For example, most fictional stories have a story grammar consisting of setting, introduction of problem, plot, climax, solution to problem, and ending. Students can explicitly be taught this

story grammar and use this knowledge as they read fiction to improve their comprehension. In comparison, when students begin reading expository text (content area textbooks), generally around fourth grade, they must learn how to utilize textbook features (e.g., tables and graphs or indexes), and apply their skills to understanding more technical information.

Strategies. Proficient readers utilize comprehension strategies to derive meaning from text. Comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive and metacognitive strategies when they encounter barriers to understanding printed material. A few examples of cognitive strategies include previewing, summarizing, and story mapping. Examples of metacognitive strategies include self-monitoring, and self-questioning. Modeling comprehension strategies and providing students many opportunities to practice strategies should be an integral part of reading comprehension instruction.

Tasks. Teachers present students with varying types of activities or tasks in order to evaluate reading comprehension. Good instruction will include tasks ranging in difficulty from literal questions requiring simple "yes" or "no" responses, to more difficult production responses that depend on different levels of inference. Students need explicit instruction on how to respond to a particular task, including task requirements. Specifying the requirements of the task before students' begin ensures that they have the necessary information needed to respond appropriately (Kameenui & Simmons, 1990).

Teach Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a skill, and like other skills, it can be taught. Because reading is an active process, the primary goal of reading instruction is to teach students how to interact with text in order to derive meaning from it. In the next section, we have summarized some general recommendations for teaching comprehension skills.

General Teaching Recommendations

- Use pre-reading questions.
- Teach self-monitoring, "Do I understand what I'm reading?"
- Select texts that are appropriate to students' interest and skill levels.
- Provide readers with background knowledge on a topic before reading text.
- Describe a situation that connects text with students' personal experiences.
- Ensure many opportunities for students to discuss stories with each other.
- Pre-teach difficult vocabulary words.
- Teach students how to use context to understand difficult vocabulary words.
- Create exercises requiring inferences from a story.
- Teach students how to identify the main topic of a passage.
- Teach students how to use text features including pictures, headings, and the glossary.
- Evaluate students using multiple means of assessment.
- Monitor the progress of low-performing students with weekly measures of oral reading rate.

Instructional Strategies

The best way to teach comprehension is to teach strategies for understanding text.

Creating Predictions

Teaching students to predict what will happen next in a section of text is an effective technique for improving reading comprehension. In this strategy, teachers ask students to stop reading at a particular place in a passage and predict what will happen next. Students may respond in writing or orally. They also may respond individually, with peers, or in small groups.

Instructional steps for creating predictions:

- Select a passage for students to read silently.
- Model predicting behavior by generating predictions about the first paragraph.
- Explain reasons for your predictions.
- Have students read the first paragraph to determine whether you are correct. Ask them to state why.
- You may need to read the selection to students who are not fluent readers, and then discuss.
- Give adequate think time for students to develop their own ideas before sharing answers.
- Have students create predictions. All predictions that logically follow the passage are adequate. It does not matter if they are correct.
- For textbook prose, encourage students to generate predictions using text features.
- Activity can be completed alone (written response), or in pairs (oral response).

Adapted from Kameenui, E. & Simmons, D. (1990) Designing instructional strategies. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Student Generated Questions

This exercise is ideal for working in pairs (student with teacher or two students). Each person reads the same passage and takes turns asking each other questions about the material just read. Types of questions should vary. For example, a person may request that the reader provide factual information, generate inferences, or make a prediction. This exercise will be most successful if modeling and practice are provided.

Instructional steps for student generated questions:

- Model multiple demonstrations of question-generation procedures by reading sections of text orally and asking questions.
- Ask questions that require factual information, understanding of cause-effect relationships, vocabulary knowledge, inferential reasoning, or predictions.
- Repeat procedure with a different section of text, but ask students to generate questions.
- Shift reading responsibility to students. In pairs, students read a section either silently or orally, and then generate questions for each other. Answers can be shared orally or in writing.
- Adjust the amount of text assigned based on rates of reading and levels of comprehension.

Adapted from Kameenui, E. & Simmons, D. (1990) Designing instructional strategies. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Story Retells

Retells strengthen comprehension by requiring students to read a story silently or orally, and then summarize the story in their own words. Written retells are practical for group administration. However, as an instructional activity, students may complete this activity in pairs, summarizing what was read aloud. Students should not refer back to the story while verbalizing or writing their retells. Retells also are used in evaluation, and various types of retells are described in the evaluation section.

For some students, it may be necessary to break the story into short segments. If a student is still unable to summarize the information, reread that section of text and try again. If a story is completed in segments, student should provide a concise summary of entire story when finished.

Prompts may be used to engage students in a retelling of the story. Following is a list of general prompts:

- "Tell me about the story as if telling it to a friend who has not read it."
- "What was the major event that occurred in the story?"
- "Tell me about some of the story's details."

To help students narrow their responses, use questions such as:

- "Describe the character that you just named."
- "How did the characters resolve their problem(s)?"
- "Why was that the most important event?"

Adapted from Tindal, G. A., and Marston, D. B. (1990). Classroom-based assessment: Evaluating instructional outcomes. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Reciprocal Teaching

With this technique students take on the role of the teacher. In this format, students get practice in summarizing, generating questions, examining passages for items that need clarification, and predicting. This activity works well with expository text.

You will need a passage at least several paragraphs long. Print each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Students will read and discuss one paragraph at a time.

Instructional steps for reciprocal teaching:

- Instruct students to silently read the first paragraph.
- Summarize the paragraph with one complete sentence.
  Ex. *This paragraph describes some of the sights Julia saw at the County Fair.*
- Turn the summary statement into a question using who, what, where, when, how, or why.
  Ex. *What are some of the sights Julia saw at the county fair?*
- Then, ask students to create questions from the paragraph.
- Ask students if there are any items that need clarification.
- Ask students to predict what might happen next.
- Select a student to act as teacher.
- Repeat procedure described above using the next paragraph.

You might want to supply a cue card for the student who is acting as teacher, listing these steps:

1. Class silently reads paragraph.
2. "Teacher" summarizes paragraph.
3. "Teacher" turns summary statement into questions.
4. Class answers questions and creates their own.
5. "Teacher" clarifies any misunderstandings.
6. Class predicts what will happen next.
7. "Teacher" chooses next person to act as teacher.

Adapted from Howell, K., Fox, S., & Morehead, M. K. (1993). Curriculum-based evaluation (2nd Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

Story Grammar

Story grammar refers to the common elements found in narrative text. Elements of story grammar include characters, setting, plot (or events), outcome, characters' responses, and ending. Listed below are three commonly used strategies in teaching story grammar.

Story Webbing. This exercise can be done individually, in small groups, or with the whole class. Create a web with the basic elements as the hubs. Have students fill in the specifics or the supporting details.

Story Mapping. Provide a handout with the basic elements of story grammar as headings. Students use complete sentences to tell as much about each element as they can.

Highlighting. After students have been introduced to a particular element of story grammar, they are given a short passage to read. Students use highlighters or underline any sentence or phrase that demonstrates that element.

Adapted from Kameenui, E. & Simmons, D. (1990) Designing instructional strategies. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

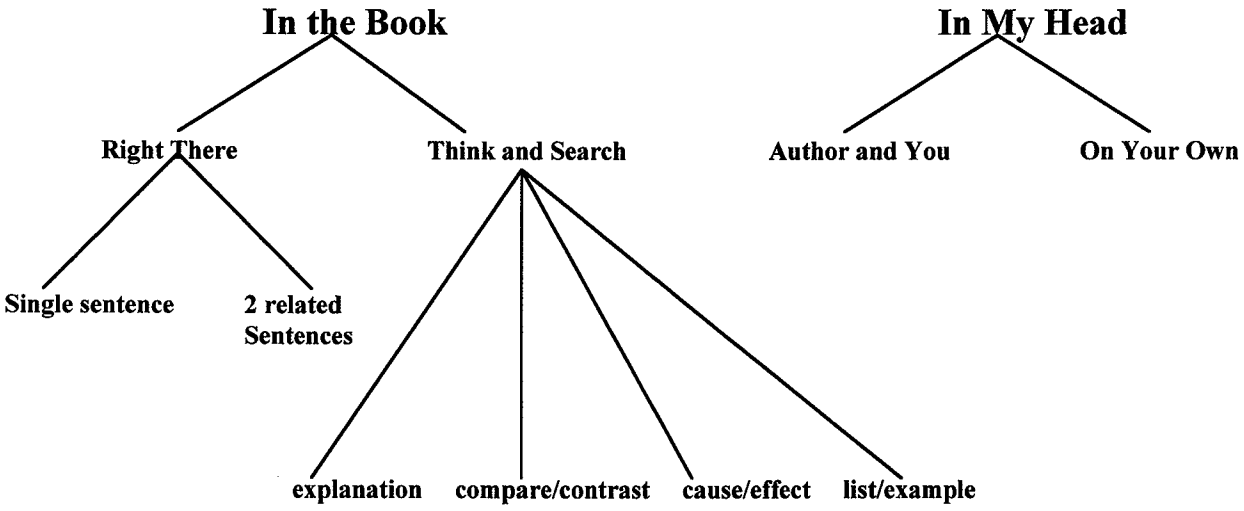
RCRC

RCRC - Read, Cover, Recite, and Check is a simple procedure for engaging students in self-monitoring as they read. The following steps are taught through modeling and practice:

- Read. Each student silently reads a small section of text.
- Cover. Student covers up the portion of text just read.
- Recite. Student silently recites information learned.
- Check. Student checks accuracy of recitation.

Question-Answer Relationships

Question and answer relationships (QARs) are intended to increase students' awareness of information they are required to understand. The vocabulary used in the strategy is targeted for elementary-aged students. Using this comprehension strategy, students read questions they are expected to answer before reading assigned material. Students label each question as being either an "In the Book" (literal) question or an "In My Head" (inferential) question. Students then use these labels and their associated prompts to make reading of the assigned chapter more efficient. The two types of questions and their corresponding prompts are illustrated below:



Adapted from Raphael, T. E. (1986). Teaching question answer relationships, revisited. Reading Teacher, v. 39, n.6, 516-22.

Adjunct Questions

In this strategy, questions are added after short sections of a passage are read as opposed to the traditional type of questioning that is generally reserved for the end of a passage. Adjunct questions require the reader to attend to the task, to respond to inquiries, and to more frequently assess their understanding of what is read.

Instructional steps for using adjunct questions:

* Insert questions after short segments of text are read.
* Increase length of text segments incrementally to parallel student comprehension.
* Ask questions that require the reader to identify critical pieces of information, tie text together, or make predictions.

Adapted from Kameenui, E. & Simmons, D. (1990) Designing instructional strategies. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Pre-reading Questions

In this simple procedure, teachers provide students with end-of-the-chapter questions before they begin reading. This strategy is best used with expository text, and is particularly effective if students are taught to develop their own questions.

Adapted from Howell,K., Fox, S., & Morehead, M. K. (1993). Curriculum-based evaluation (2nd Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole

Assisted Self-Monitoring

Assisted self-monitoring teaches readers to correct their decoding errors. Comprehension of what is read is compromised when students make numerous decoding errors; therefore, they need to be taught to read accurately. Listed below are the **instructional steps for using assisted self-monitoring:**

- Tell student, "Whenever you make an error, I'm going to tap the table with my pen. When I tap the table I want you to fix the error."
- Student reads passage aloud to teacher.
- When student makes a decoding error, the teacher gently taps the table with a pen.
- Student corrects the error.
- If student responds successfully to this activity, tap at the end of the sentence that contains error. (You may want to start at this point; sometimes it takes reading to the end of a sentence before student realizes he has made a mistake.)
- As student begins to self-correct, decrease tapping and reinforce accurate reading.
- If errors persist, try to determine if decoding or vocabulary is the problem.

Self-Monitoring for Meaning

Teaching students to be aware of their reading process is important. Self-monitoring refers to a student's skill at tracking his or her understanding of text. Readers who successfully monitor their comprehension will re-read confusing passages, slow their reading rate, and/or consult reference materials.

Teach students to monitor their reading for meaning by using the strategy described above, but upon hearing the tap of a pen, students summarize what was read.

Adapted from Howell,K., Fox, S., & Morehead, M. K. (1993). Curriculum-based evaluation (2nd Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

Critical Reading

Critical reading is a fairly advanced reading skill. In this strategy, teachers encourage students to question what they read and to construct a deeper level of understanding of the author's message. Because this is a higher-order skill, teachers should model the skill extensively before encouraging students to proceed through the following steps:

- Identify the author's conclusions.
- Determine what evidence is presented to support these conclusions.
- Determine the trustworthiness of the author (judge if he or she is qualified or possibly bias).
- Identify faulty arguments (such as improper generalization, and confusion of correlation with causation).
- Further challenge students to read text critically by engaging them in compare and contrast, evaluation, or application activities.

Adapted from Howell,K., Fox, S., & Morehead, M. K. (1993). Curriculum-based evaluation (2nd Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

Overview: Evaluation

Evaluating Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an abstract multidimensional process that is not easily observed, yet to facilitate measurement of this process we must rely on observable behaviors. Tindal and Marston (1990) suggest using the terms *reading* and *reacting* (instead of decoding and comprehending). Use of the term *reacting* shifts the focus from psychological processes, which cannot be observed, to actual behaviors and products.

Commonly used evaluation techniques include measures of oral reading rate, maze tests, and reading retells. The evaluation techniques used will depend on your purpose, as illustrated in the following examples:

1. Teacher wants to place students in appropriate skill groups at the beginning of the year. Assessment used - group-administered maze test.

2. Teacher wants detailed information on the comprehension skills of only one student. Assessment used - oral reading retell.

3. Teacher wants to frequently monitor the reading progress of each student in her lowest skill group. Assessment used – timed oral readings to collect weekly data.

Many of the tasks used to teach comprehension skills also are used to evaluate comprehension. In this monograph, we do not detail how to use the instructional strategies previously described for evaluation purposes, but we do provide you with three specific evaluation techniques proven to be effective in assessing reading comprehension. In the following section we describe these techniques and provide directions for developing, administering, and interpreting results of each method. Then, we provide a specific set of directions and an example of each technique for your immediate use.

Oral Reading Fluency

Description. Reading fluency is a combination of reading speed and accuracy. The most objective measure of reading fluency is a measure of oral reading rate. Furthermore, there is a strong, positive correlation between oral reading rate and reading comprehension. In other words, a student who reads a passage quickly will understand it better than a student who reads it slowly (Fuchs, Fuchs & Maxwell, 1988). A widely accepted theory explains this relationship by purporting that when little effort is required to decode words, more cognitive attention is available to interpret meaning (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Stanovich, 1991). In consideration of this relationship between reading rate and reading comprehension, we suggest that teachers first assess students' reading comprehension by measuring oral reading rate.

An oral reading fluency measure is an efficient, easily administered evaluation tool that lends itself to regular classroom use. Furthermore, a measure of a student's oral reading rate reflects his or her progress, as well as the effects of instruction.

Development and Administration. In short, the measure consists of having a student read a passage aloud, while being timed for one minute. The evaluator follows along on a separate copy, marking errors. The evaluator's copy includes a cumulative word count located in the right margin. Once a student completes the reading timing, the evaluator subtracts the number of errors from the total number of words read to compute a correct words per minute score. Additionally, the evaluator may code errors to reveal specific error patterns. Formatted passages may be purchased or they can be developed from curriculum materials, such as basal readers. A thorough oral reading assessment includes separate timings on three reading passages, and calculation of the median score.

Score Interpretation. There are many different ways to interpret information collected from measures of reading rate. Two of the most common uses are evaluating a student's individual progress or evaluating the scores of a student in comparison to his or her peers.

When fluency is measured at regular intervals, using standardized procedures, a teacher has powerful evidence of a student's progress and the effectiveness of reading instruction. Information can be collected frequently in order to monitor a student's progress toward an individual reading goal. Furthermore, by timing the rate of student's oral reading a teacher immediately knows whether or not comprehension is hindered because the text cannot be decoded. If a student cannot read text fluently, he or she will not be able to derive any meaning from it.

The reading rate of any particular student can also be indexed against local normative performance in the curriculum. In other words, data can be used to compare one student's performance to that of his or her peers. This data is helpful when establishing skill groups for reading instruction. Oral reading rate also meets the criteria (standardized administration, validity, and reliability) for measures used to assist in eligibility determinations for Title I or Special Education (Shinn, 1989).

Administration and scoring procedures for measuring students' oral reading rates can be found on pages 23 and 24 of this monograph.

Reading Retells

Description. This technique evaluates a student's ability to summarize what was read in his or her own words, a behavior that demonstrates strong comprehension. The retell technique involves having students describe, in spoken or written form, the content of a passage immediately after reading it. Retells are instrumental as both an assessment tool and an

instructional strategy. The retelling reveals the student's ability to grasp the main idea and understand a passage's supporting details.

Development and Administration. Reading retells are straightforward and require minimal preparation time. Depending on the scoring guidelines, students are allowed to paraphrase or use exact words. Although some teachers believe that if students repeat passages word-for-word it is hard to tell if they have derived meaning from them. Howell et. al. (1993) advises that you inform students of the evaluation criteria before beginning, so that they are clear about teacher expectations. Once a student begins retelling, prompts are kept to a minimum. In this way, administration of a retell used for evaluation is different than administration of a retell used for instruction.

Written responses can be simultaneously completed by a large group of students and are, therefore, less time consuming than oral responses. Written responses are often used with secondary students. Oral responses are often used with younger students, or students with limited writing abilities. Although less time efficient, oral retelling allows the teacher a first-hand observation of each student's reactions.

Score Interpretation. Scoring of retells is more complicated than their development and administration. The easiest way to score a retell is to assign an overall rating to the "quality" of the retell. Criteria for scoring the quality of retells are presented on page 26. Although efficient, this type of evaluation fails to provide teachers with specific instructional information. A more elaborate scoring procedure awards a "richness of response" score to each story grammar element. Directions for scoring retells in this fashion are found on page 27. Finally, when used for expository text, teachers may choose to award points for each section of a text that is accurately retold. Sample criteria for these procedures are shared on page 28.

Scores can be recorded as raw scores, or converted to percentage scores. Teachers can use this information to record a student's rate of progress, or to compare a student's scores to a previously set criterion (e.g., score of "3" or more on each story grammar element).

Maze Assessments

Description. The maze is an efficient evaluation tool because it can be used to assess large groups of students at the same time. Students read a passage in which occasional words have been replaced with blanks (of a standard length). The reader must select the missing word from a list of several choices that includes the deleted word and two or more distractors. The difficulty and validity of the test depends on the number of omissions (sample size), the quality of omissions, and the quantity and quality of distractors. Maze tests available for purchase represent several different formats.

Maze evaluations have been extensively used to determine reading level and instructional placement. However, cutoff scores for instructional levels have little meaning unless maze construction and presentation formats are standardized (Parker, Hasbrouck, & Tindal, 1992). For this reason, we recommend you purchase maze tests that have been field-tested and demonstrate strong technical adequacy. When combined with oral reading rate measures, the maze is very accurate in predicting placement into reading groups for elementary students.

Development and Administration. Teachers develop a maze test by choosing a reading passage of approximately 200 words and deleting every nth word in the passage. We suggest that teachers delete every 7^{th} word, if it is a meaningful word. It is more important to delete meaningful words than it is to consistently delete every 7^{th} word. Then, teachers need to generate word choices (usually 3) to include underneath the omitted word in the passage, along with the actual word.

Administration of the test begins with the teacher reading a group of students a standardized set of directions. Students then silently read the passage while filling in (or circling) the correct word for every blank. Completion of the maze is not timed but students usually finish a typical maze (200 words, 30 items) within 10 minutes (15 to 20 minutes for very low performers). Administering two tests is easily accomplished and produces a more reliable score.

Score Interpretation. Mazes produce objective data that can be interpreted as raw scores or percentage correct scores. Most researchers agree that a score of 90% represents strong comprehension and material is at student's independent reading level. If a student scores between 70-80% teachers can infer that the material is at his or her instructional level. A more detailed interpretation can be conducted by noting the types of errors a student makes. For example, students may choose distractors that are syntactically correct but do not make sense, or their errors may appear to be random. A set of maze administration directions can be found on page 29, and an example of a maze test is located on page 30 and 31.

Evaluation Techniques

Easy and efficient procedures for measuring reading comprehension.

Oral Reading Rate Measure

This test is administered individually, in an area free from distraction. Have two copies of each passage, a numbered copy for the evaluator to use and an unnumbered copy for the student.

Administration

1. Say to the student (verbatim for the first reading): *"When I say 'start,' begin reading aloud at the top of this page* [demonstrate by pointing]. *Be sure to do your best reading. If you come to a word you don't know, I'll tell it to you. At the end of one minute I'll say 'stop.' This is not a speed reading test, so read at a comfortable rate. Do you have any questions?"*
2. Say *Start.* (Do not use the word *Go* to begin, since this implies racing.)
3. Follow along on your copy, marking the words that are read incorrectly. If a student stops or struggles with a word for 3 seconds, tell him the word and mark it as incorrect.
4. At one minute, you may either say *Stop* and place a vertical line after the last word read or mark the last word and let the student finish the sentence he is reading.
5. If you are having the student do another reading, proceed as above.

Example

It was the middle of summer vacation and it had been very hot all week. Crystal	16
and her brother Tim sat at the dining room table right in front of the fan, but	33
it did not seem to do any good. They felt like they were in an oven.	49
Looking out the window, Tim noticed that the sprinkler had been	60
turned on to water the back lawn. This gave them an idea for how they could	76
stay cool and have some fun too. They ran out the door into the front yard	92
towards the water faucet. Crystal ran the fastest and got there first. She turned	106
the water on all the way. As the water traveled through the hose it began to spray	123
water in every direction. Soon they were soaking wet. They turned another hose on	137
and took turns squirting each other. Their plan seemed to work. After a while	151
They forgot about the hot sun.	157

Scoring

1. The following types of errors are counted: a) mispronunciations, b) substitutions, c) omissions, and d) words not read within 3 seconds.
   a) Mispronunciations are words that are misread: dog for dig.
   b) Substitutions are words that are substituted for the stimulus word: mom for mother.
   c) Omissions are words skipped.
   d) 3-second rule. If a student is struggling to pronounce a word or hesitates for 3 seconds, the student is told the word, and it is counted as an error.
2. The following are not counted as incorrect: a) repetitions, b) self-corrections, and c) insertions.
   a) Repetitions are words or phrases which are repeated.
   b) Self-corrections are made after a word is initially misread.
   c) Insertions are words added by student.
3. Determine the number of words read correctly by subtracting the number of errors from the cumulative number read.

Adapted from Tindal, G. A., and Marston, D. B. (1990). Classroom-based assessment: Evaluating instructional outcomes. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Reading Retells – Oral and Written

This procedure may be accomplished with an oral or written response. Select passages of fiction or non-fiction text at the students' instructional skill level. Passages should be 200-250 words long, taken from the beginning of a chapter or where there is a natural break in the story. The content should be interesting to students. Avoid passages that consist mainly of dialogue. Retype or copy the entire passage in moderate-sized print. The evaluator should have a copy for each student who will be tested.

Use a written retell if the student has adequate skills. If using oral retell, you may want to set up a tape recorder to facilitate complete and accurate scoring.

Individual Administration

1. Tell student that you would like her to silently read a story and then tell you everything that she can remember.
2. Have student read the passage silently.
3. Tell student, *"Take a moment to think about what you have just read.* (Pause for 3-5 seconds.) *Now tell me everything you can remember about the story."*
4. Scoring techniques differ depending on your purpose for the assessment. Three different scoring techniques are described on the following pages.
5. When the student indicates that she is finished, the evaluator may give a neutral prompt such as *"Is there more you can remember?"* or *"Is there anything else you'd like to add?"*
6. With written retells, most students will be finished within 15 minutes from the time they have started reading.

Group Administration

* Procedures are similar to those above except that responses are written.
* Group administration may be timed or untimed, however, most students will finish within 15 minutes.

Scoring Method 1: Scoring Retells for Overall Quality

This rating scale uses 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest rating. There isn't an established standard, but a score of 3 and above is easily obtained by most primary-grade students.

5 Generalizations are made beyond the text; includes central thesis and major ideas, supporting details, and relevant supplemental information. Exhibits strong coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility.

4 Includes central thesis, major ideas, supporting details, and relevant supplemental information. Exhibits coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility.

3 Relates some but not all major ideas, supporting details, and relevant supplemental information. Exhibits a moderate coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility.

2 Relates one major idea, some supporting details, and some relevant supplemental information. Low degree of coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility.

1 Does not relate a major idea, but includes at least one detail; may include supplemental information. Absence of coherence, completeness, and comprehensibility.

Adapted from Tindal, G. A., & Marston, D. B. (1990). Classroom-based assessment: Evaluating instructional outcomes. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Example

The story was about a yung boy and his new puppie. His mom did not want him to hav it but his dad said okay but his dad didn't liv there with him and his mom. The boy was sad and bagged his mom to let him keep it. His dad and mom got a devorce. He mised his dad. His dog was cute.

Score Awarded: 3. Related one major idea from story with some details, but only moderate coherence.

Scoring Method 2: Using Story Grammar Elements to Evaluate Retells

Character(s): Name or description of lead or supporting character(s).

Setting: Name or description of the place events occurred (i.e., forest, or apartment).

Problem: The conflict character(s) must resolve.

Goal: Mention of the character(s) objective, or what they were trying to accomplish.

Action: Any events that occurred as the character(s) attempted to reach their goal.

Outcome: Did character(s) reach goal and what happened to them as a result of their effort?

Using a scoring table similar to the table below, score student's retell for richness of responses related to story grammar elements. For example, if student mentions a character as a "boy" the teacher would assign a 1 (simple) for richness of response related to character(s). If the student says "a quiet and shy boy" the teacher would assign a 3 or 4 (more descriptive). Record examples included under each element and assign each example a point value.

Story Grammar Element	Example(s)	Richness of Response
Character(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Time(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Place(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Problem(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Goal(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Action(s)		1.....2.....3.....4
		1.....2.....3.....4
Outcome		1.....2.....3.....4

Adapted from Hall, Tindal, & Flick (1993). Portfolio assessment using Curriculum-Based Measurement: A model for schools. Research, Consultation, & Teaching Program, Training Module No. 10.

Scoring Method 3: Using Thought Units to Evaluate Comprehension of Expository Text

Comprehension of expository text can be assessed with content retells. Content retells can be shared orally or in writing. Written retells can be scored qualitatively on a similar scale provided earlier, or they can be scored more explitily using thought units as described below. Thought units can also be categorized in various ways. The tables below illustrate this method.

Student Example

During the 1970's and 1980's El Salvador, Nicaraguea, and Guatemala were torn by civil war. / The remaining four Central American nations, Costa Rica and ...(I can't remember the other ones) shared many problems that their neighbors had. /But Costa Rica and the other 3 haven't had to rely on war to solve their problems. /They voted /or negotiated with treaties /or...

Total Thought Units Scored: 5

TOPIC

PEOPLE	EVENT
	El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala were torn by civil war

SETTING

TIME PERIOD	LOCATION
During the 1970's and 1980's	

PROBLEM(S)

The remaining four Central American nations, Costa Rica and ...(I can't remember the other ones) shared many problems that their neighbors had. /

SOLUTION(S)

But Costa Rica and the other 3 haven't had to rely on war to solve their problems./
They voted
/or negotiated with treaties /or...

Total Thought Units Scored: 6

Maze Tests

Maze tests consist of 200-250 words, with some of the words deleted. Students are given four possible responses for each deleted word. Creating reliable mazes is difficult and very time-consuming. If possible, mazes should be purchased pre-constructed. The MASI-R (Multilevel Academic Skills Inventory – revised: Reading test), consists of a set of curriculum-based measures in basic skill areas (including oral reading fluency measures and maze tests). To order these materials, contact Ken Howell at (360) 650-3971.

If you choose to design your own maze, care must be taken when choosing which words to omit and generating quality distractors. Because this test requires students' to read large sections of text, it is not recommended for first graders.

Administration

1. Maze tests can be administered to groups of students or 1:1.
2. If the student is not familiar with the maze procedure, demonstrate using a practice example.
3. Give the student a copy of the passage and say, *"You will read this story yourself. When you come to a blank with four words below it, circle the word that belongs in the blank. Pick the best word. Finish the whole story."* Tell students they are allowed to go back and change answers if they realize, through their reading, that there was a better answer.
4. Provide a generous amount of time, about 20 minutes. However most students will finish in about 10 minutes.

Scoring

Determine percent correct. Ninety-percent and above is generally considered to indicate the passage is at the reader's independent or recreational reading level. For a thorough evaluation, administer an oral reading rate measure.

Adapted from Howell, K., Fox, S., & Morehead, M. K. (1993). Curriculum-based evaluation (2nd Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole.

Student Example

The prospect of returning home unaccompanied appeared more likely as Monday morning approached. A sense of ___1___ now surrounded all of Brandon's actions. He
peace, urgency, gratitude, pride

woke to an alarm clock, dressed without a shower, maneuvering around half-filled suitcases, over stacks of newspapers, telephone books and unwashed dishes, and through ___2___ note papers and dirty clothes as he left his room before light, room
private, lecture, hand written, strewn

keys in one hand and his ___3___ in the other. This degradation of habit was as
plane ticket, work gloves, stale breakfast, suitcase

foreign and unnatural to him as this month-long stay in the city.

He had never been outside of his rural farming community for more than a day at a time before he found himself living in the dingiest part of the city in the cheapest motel he could tolerate. His search for his father in those first few days had been laced with anticipation. He would leave the motel ___4___ and return long into the night.
early in the morning, to go home, with his father, near his farm

Exhausted from walking the streets, following lead after lead, he found his bed a welcome relief, falling quickly into a deep and untroubled sleep until morning.

Ultimately, however, his ___5___ had been transformed into anguish and
good luck, optimism, father, vacation

disheartenment. As the days and weeks passed with ___6___ and one useless lead
only success, his family, no results, his roommates

following another, he became worn down by the inevitable shouting matches that would ensue after he was forced to reveal his purpose to those most capable of aide.

He gradually came to hate his ___7___ with its continuous traffic noise, dancing lights
morning bus ride, home town, nightly prison, new job

reflecting off his walls, the sounds of shouts and screams, and its mazed paths through piles of neglect.

His ___8___ nights presented an unwelcome opportunity for him to reflect on
peaceful, restless, swing shift, Monday

his failure. Had he come here just to meet a father he had never known, or was his journey a quest to help find meaning for his brothers and sisters, or maybe to escape unwanted responsibilities? As the oldest, he had been the family's father figure. He was responsible for protecting his ___9___. He could sense their yearning for answers to
younger siblings, father, home town, secrets

unspoken questions. It was his duty to seek out his ___10___, even after it became
landlord, family, siblings, father

increasingly clear what he might find. Though Brandon felt the same ___11___, wasn't
hatred, optimism, restlessness, void

it true that if he could at least prove their father was still alive, he could finally shed a burden that had weighed on him for years?

He began his final ___12___ with little hope and little energy. One last
weekend, weeks, plane ride, journey home

course of action remained untried. It was dangerous, with possible repercussions reaching far beyond himself, and offered scant promise of success. Yet,

he felt compelled to ___13___.
quit, proceed, call home, celebrate

References

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