

Chapter 8

Howell (1999, pp. 7-8)

1. Reading comprehension is an interactive process in which the reader brings what she knows about the world to the printed page. What is known is used to construct meaning from what is written. Readers draw upon decoding skills, vocabulary knowledge, language, prior knowledge and d strategies to make sense of what is written.
2. Text variables influence reading comprehension. Text variables include text structure as well as vocabulary difficulty and density of ideas. Text structure refers to both general organizers and overall structure. The authors define general organizers as: (1) introductory overviews, (2) focus questions, (3) headings, and (4) summaries. Overall structure is the way ideas in the text are related to convey a message.
3. Assumed causes for reading comprehension failure may include absence or deficiencies in the following Comprehension strategies: active reading, monitoring, adjustment to text, merging with prior knowledge and/or clarification.
4. Assumed causes for reading comprehension failure may include absence or deficiencies in the following enabling skills: prior knowledge, decoding skills, vocabulary (semantics), language (syntax), and/or strategies.
5. Automatic Decoding significantly influences reading comprehension and is one of the most frequent causes of comprehension failure.
6. Sampling a complex process like reading comprehension is difficult. Since most survey measures have limitations, it is recommended that multiple measures be employed. Of the available measures "questioning after passage reading" seems to have the most serious limitations.
7. Directions for constructing, administering, and interpreting survey and specific level reading procedures are detailed in this chapter.
8. Advantages of cloze format include: large sample size; item difficulty randomly distributed; ease of scoring; and high fidelity to the reading act (for example, text look-backs and look-aheads are allowed).
9. Disadvantages of cloze and maze format include: it is not a direct measure of the student's recognition of the most important part of passage; and, it can only be used with redundant/predictable text).
10. Advantages of maze format include: ease of scoring ; success depends on passage clues (fidelity to reading); distractors can be used to alter test difficulty; and it collects a large sample of behavior.

11. Disadvantages of maze format include: the risk of poorly selected distractors.
12. Advantages of paraphrasing include: the fact that student responses are not influenced by questions; it supplies an overall impression of student's understanding; and can it be used with daily lessons.
13. Disadvantages of paraphrasing: it is hard to score; and, it is difficult to control spontaneous responses without adding questions (which negates one of the advantages).
14. Advantages of story retelling include: the retell is not influenced by questions; it provides the number of idea units recalled; it can be used with daily lessons so high it has good fidelity; and, it can be compared to the text structure or a story map.
15. Disadvantages of story retelling include: it is sometimes awkward to transcribe student responses; idea unit analysis is time consuming; and it may only tap recall, not understanding.
16. Advantages of questioning after passage reading include: teacher can focus on specific information.
17. Disadvantages of questions include: hard to score; only a few questions possible per paragraph; levels of comprehension may not match questions or may not exist; the risk of poorly written questions; and student responses limited by question.
18. Advantages of oral reading include: ease of scoring; sensitivity to instruction; highly interactive (reflects all reading skills).
19. Disadvantages of oral reading: because it may have low "face validity" to some teachers you may need to explain why you are using it; it is only useful for screening and monitoring (doesn't yield much information which guides teaching).
20. Good readers are flexible and capably shift among enabling skills and strategies to construct meaning from text.
21. Reading teachers should be prepared to work with students who exhibit cultural diversity or those who are bilingual. The following topics should be discussed in relation to reading comprehension: discourse style and its interaction with reading comprehension; text structure and its relationship to discourse style; the influence of vocabulary and prior knowledge on comprehension.

Howell, K. (1999). Wadsworth Publishing Curriculum-Based Evaluation: Teaching and Decision Making, 3e: Sample Course Syllabi in *Instructor Manual, Syllabus, Evaluation* Retrieved February 23, 2009 from http://www.wadsworth.com/cgi-wadsworth/course_products_wp.pl?fid=M20bI&product_isbn_issn=9780534343705&discipline_number=3&token=C42F437771554B07DAA8767670438C43340AAD8F43C650C43EFA8F5B32B681834CA7F5AA285BED476642621CB81FA6F5