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# RESEARCH SUMMARY

The following is a summary of the research upon which *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* is based.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

*Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II (CARS Series II)* is the assessment portion of a reading program that spans from diagnosis to assessment. This assessment tool identifies reading strategies that are understood, as well as those that need further study and reinforcement. The organisational design of the *CARS Series II* is grounded in several areas of research: reading comprehension, metacognition and self-assessment, and effectiveness of classroom assessment.

### The *CARS Series II* Concentrates on Twelve Reading Strategies

The *CARS Series II* provides practice with twelve reading strategies that are the core reading tools students need in order to make sense of what they are reading. ‘. . . [M]any students have demonstrated difficulties with skills that are central to reading comprehension (i.e., identifying main topics, significant supporting information, and relations between a text’s main topics’ (Seidenberg, 1989). The reading skills of Finding Main Idea, Recalling Facts and Details, Understanding Sequence, Recognising Cause and Effect, Comparing and Contrasting, Making Predictions, Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences, Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion, Distinguishing Between Real and Make-believe (Books B–C) and Identifying Author’s Purpose may be difficult for some students to master because the thinking processes involved in applying the strategies are abstract in nature. These reading skills represent the unseen text structure of a reading passage. The reading strategies Finding Word Meaning in Context, Interpreting Figurative Language and Summarising (Books D–H) are direct tools readers can actively use to comprehend reading selections. Book A probes eight reading strategies. These reading strategies are essential because of the difficulty students experience with different styles of language. With *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II*, teachers gain a clear road map of reading instruction for each student.

### Metacognition and Self-assessment

Metacognitive training in reading is a very effective instructional technique. ‘Good readers often will reflect on what they have just read, perhaps evaluating the credibility of the material. . . . Monitoring also occurs at the conclusion of a reading. Thus, good readers can be aware of whether their understanding of the text is consistent with all the ideas expressed in it’ (Pressley, 2002, p. 297). The *CARS Series II* employs metacognitive questioning in the form of student self-assessment activities. The self-questioning in each student assessment brings to the forefront the student’s knowledge about a concept or strategy. They are sorting, organising and consolidating their thoughts about their reading performance through self-evaluation and monitoring.

### Effectiveness of Classroom Assessment

*Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* is an assessment tool that helps teachers focus their reading instruction and helps students recognise the reading strategies that need improvement. Trimble, Gay and Mathews (2005) summarise current findings about the benefits of using assessments to guide instruction. ‘Black and William (1998) and Guskey (2003) have documented the use of classroom assessments to improve instruction. Both *Turning Points 2000* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) and the Southern Regional Education Board (2001) recommend using data from ongoing assessments and access to more data is now well defined’ (p. 26). *Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II* offers teachers a flexible schedule in which to administer the assessments and record students’ performances. ‘In a standards-based classroom, assessment is an integral part of instruction and is aligned with the curriculum. The teacher collects evidence of the students’ knowledge, their ability to use that knowledge, and their disposition toward learning. Student performance is monitored to promote learning, to adjust instruction and to report progress’ (Midgett, 2001).

# UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGIES

- **Finding Main Idea**

The main idea tells what a story is mostly about.

Questions about main idea ask what a story is *mostly* about or *mainly* about. Questions about main idea might also ask you to choose the best title for a story. When you answer a question about main idea, ask yourself, ‘What is the story telling me? What is the story mostly about?’

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- **Recalling Facts and Details**

Every story has facts and details. Facts and details tell more about the main idea. Questions about facts and details ask about something that you read in the story. You can look back to the story to find the answer to a question about facts and details.

# LESSON 1

**Read this story about two animals. Then answer questions about the story. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 8.**

## Turtle and Rabbit

One day Rabbit was hopping through the woods. On the way, he saw Turtle. Rabbit watched as Turtle walked along. Turtle was moving very slowly.

Rabbit hopped over to Turtle. Rabbit was always one to say what was on his mind. ‘Turtle, can you walk any faster?’ asked Rabbit.

*That is a mean thing to say!* thought Turtle. Turtle had heard stories about rabbits. Rabbits liked to race turtles. Rabbits liked to show how fast they could run. Turtle wished Rabbit would go away.

But Rabbit did not go away. ‘Did you hear me, Turtle?’ asked Rabbit. ‘I want to know if you can walk any faster.’

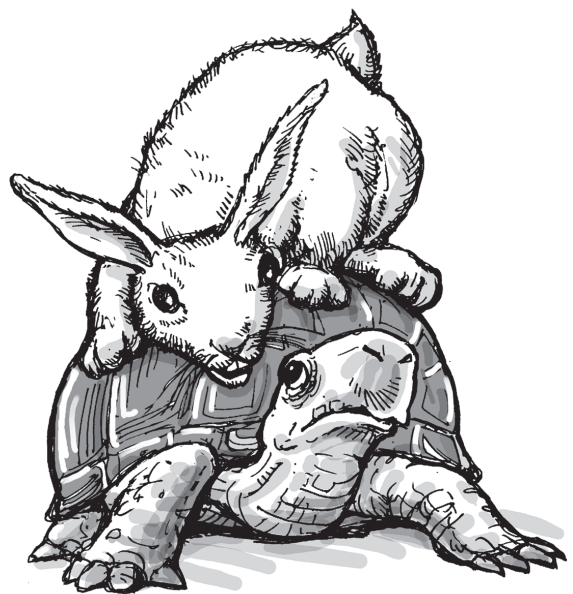
Turtle still did not answer. He just kept on walking.

Rabbit was not one to give up easily. He hopped up on top of Turtle’s shell. Then he leaned over so that his face was right in front of Turtle’s face. Now Turtle had no choice. He had to listen.

‘Hi there,’ Rabbit said.

Turtle rolled his eyes.

‘Hello,’ said Turtle. ‘I know what you want, Rabbit. You



### **Finding Main Idea**

1. The story mainly tells about
- Ⓐ the first bikes.
  - Ⓑ many kinds of bikes.
  - Ⓒ bikes with two wheels.

### **Understanding Sequence**

3. The first bike was made of
- Ⓐ cloth.
  - Ⓑ metal.
  - Ⓒ wood.

### **Recalling Facts and Details**

2. What kind of bike was made for ladies?
- Ⓐ a walking machine
  - Ⓑ a bone shaker
  - Ⓒ a tricycle

### **Recognising Cause and Effect**

4. Why were some bikes made with larger front wheels?
- Ⓐ This kind of bike could go faster.
  - Ⓑ No one fell off this kind of bike.
  - Ⓒ No one wanted a bike with two small wheels.

# TEACHER ASSESSMENT 1

Complete this page after the student has completed Lessons 1–5.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Assessing the Strategies

Students answer a question about each strategy once in each lesson, or a total of five times. Use the student's completed Answer Form to fill in the chart below. First, record the total number of correct responses for each strategy. Then record the percentage of correct responses for each strategy.

Strategy		Number of Correct Responses	Per cent Correct
Finding Main Idea	(MI)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Recalling Facts and Details	(FD)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Understanding Sequence	(US)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Recognising Cause and Effect	(CE)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Making Predictions	(MP)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Finding Word Meaning in Context	(WM)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences	(CI)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Reading Pictures	(RP)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %

*Comprehensive Assessment  
of Reading Strategies II, Book A*  
Answer Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

**Key**

- MI = Finding Main Idea
- FD = Recalling Facts and Details
- US = Understanding Sequence
- CE = Recognising Cause and Effect
- MP = Making Predictions
- WM = Finding Word Meaning in Context
- CI = Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences
- RP = Reading Pictures

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 1**

- MI 1. (A) (B) (C)
- FD 2. (A) (B) (C)
- US 3. (A) (B) (C)
- CE 4. (A) (B) (C)
- MP 5. (A) (B) (C)
- WM 6. (A) (B) (C)
- CI 7. (A) (B) (C)
- RP 8. (A) (B) (C)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 3**

- MI 1. (A) (B) (C)
- FD 2. (A) (B) (C)
- US 3. (A) (B) (C)
- CE 4. (A) (B) (C)
- MP 5. (A) (B) (C)
- WM 6. (A) (B) (C)
- CI 7. (A) (B) (C)
- RP 8. (A) (B) (C)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 5**

- MI 1. (A) (B) (C)
- FD 2. (A) (B) (C)
- US 3. (A) (B) (C)
- CE 4. (A) (B) (C)
- MP 5. (A) (B) (C)
- WM 6. (A) (B) (C)
- CI 7. (A) (B) (C)
- RP 8. (A) (B) (C)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 2**

- MI 1. (A) (B) (C)
- FD 2. (A) (B) (C)
- US 3. (A) (B) (C)
- CE 4. (A) (B) (C)
- MP 5. (A) (B) (C)
- WM 6. (A) (B) (C)
- CI 7. (A) (B) (C)
- RP 8. (A) (B) (C)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON 4**

- MI 1. (A) (B) (C)
- FD 2. (A) (B) (C)
- US 3. (A) (B) (C)
- CE 4. (A) (B) (C)
- MP 5. (A) (B) (C)
- WM 6. (A) (B) (C)
- CI 7. (A) (B) (C)
- RP 8. (A) (B) (C)