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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 of a reading passage is a sentence that tells what the passage is mostly about. Questions about main idea might ask you to find what a passage is *mostly about* or *mainly about*. The questions might also ask you to choose the best title for a passage. When answering a question about main idea, ask yourself, *What is the passage mostly about?* Then choose your answer.

- **Recalling Facts and Details**

Every reading passage contains facts and details. The facts and details tell more about the main idea. Questions about facts and details ask you about something that was stated in the passage. To answer a question about a fact or detail, look back to the passage to find the answer.

- **Understanding Sequence**

Sometimes, a passage is told in order, or sequence. Different things happen at the beginning, middle and ending of a passage. Questions about sequence ask you to remember and put events or details in order. Questions about sequence often contain key words such as *first, then, last, after* or *before*.

LESSON 1

Read this story about some campers. Then answer questions about the story. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

‘That was a great dinner,’ said Mark.

‘I’m so full. I’m ready to fall asleep,’ said Luke. ‘But the moon is so bright. It does not seem like night at all.’

‘It has been a busy day. We must have hiked for at least five kilometres. Climbing up the mountain was certainly harder than coming down,’ groaned Lu.

‘Why don’t we go to bed? We can do the dishes in the morning,’ said Tina.

The next morning everyone was up earlier than usual.

‘Has anyone seen my mirror?’ asked Lu.

‘Does anyone know where the tin cups are?’ asked Luke.

‘My watch is gone!’ cried Mark. ‘And there’s a pebble where my watch was!’

‘Something fishy is going on,’ said Lu.

The campers noticed that several forks and spoons were missing, too. A tin can had been taken from the bin. But for each thing that had been taken, a pebble had been left in its place.

‘Who would take those things? And where did all these pebbles come from?’ asked Tina.

‘Let’s think for a minute,’ said Lu. ‘How are a mirror, a tin cup, a watch, a fork, a spoon and a tin can alike?’

‘They are all shiny,’ said Mark.

‘Why would someone want to take shiny things?’ asked Tina.

‘I have an idea,’ said Lu. ‘Let’s leave some more shiny things out tonight. Then we’ll stay up late and watch. Whoever is robbing us won’t be able to give us the slip.’ Everyone agreed.

That night the campers put some shiny things in a small pile. Then they waited in one of the tents. Around midnight they heard a noise. There was a full moon in the sky. The campers could clearly see a small animal moving slowly toward the pile.

Finding Main Idea

1. What is a good name for the story?
- Ⓐ 'Forest Animals'
 - Ⓑ 'The Night-time Robber'
 - Ⓒ 'The Missing Watch'
 - Ⓓ 'A Night of Camping'

Recognising Cause and Effect

4. A wood rat is sometimes called a trade rat because
- Ⓐ they like shiny objects.
 - Ⓑ they only come out at night.
 - Ⓒ they leave something behind when they take things.
 - Ⓓ they like to decorate their homes with shiny objects.

Recalling Facts and Details

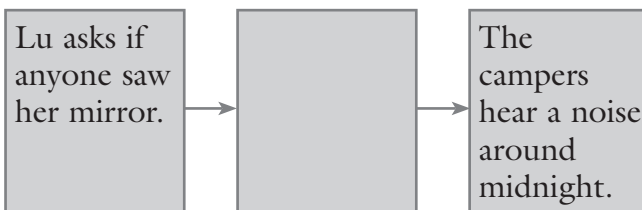
2. Each time the wood rat took something, it left behind
- Ⓐ a spoon.
 - Ⓑ a pebble.
 - Ⓒ a shiny object.
 - Ⓓ a pile of junk.

Comparing and Contrasting

5. How were all the missing objects alike?
- Ⓐ They were all shiny.
 - Ⓑ They were all made of tin.
 - Ⓒ They all belonged to Mark.
 - Ⓓ They were all used for cooking.

Understanding Sequence

3. The boxes tell about some things in the story.



What belongs in the empty box?

- Ⓐ The campers find their missing things.
- Ⓑ The campers search for the robber.
- Ⓒ The campers decide to do the dishes in the morning.
- Ⓓ The campers see that many things are missing.

Making Predictions

6. Predict what the campers will do the next time they go camping.
- Ⓐ They will bring lots of shiny objects to leave out at night.
 - Ⓑ They will make sure they hide any shiny objects at night.
 - Ⓒ They will stay up all night to make sure nothing is taken.
 - Ⓓ They will not take any shiny objects with them.

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	= _____ %
Comparing and Contrasting	(CC)	_____ 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	= _____ %
Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion	(FO)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Identifying Author's Purpose	(AP)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Interpreting Figurative Language	(FL)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %
Distinguishing Between Real and Make-believe	(RM)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %

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

Name _____
Teacher _____
Class _____

Key

MI = Finding Main Idea
FD = Recalling Facts and Details
US = Understanding Sequence
CE = Recognising Cause and Effect
CC = Comparing and Contrasting
MP = Making Predictions
WM = Finding Word Meaning
in Context
CI = Drawing Conclusions and
Making Inferences
FO = Distinguishing Between Fact
and Opinion
AP = Identifying Author's Purpose
FL = Interpreting Figurative
Language
RM = Distinguishing Between Real
and Make-believe

Date: _____

LESSON 1

MI 1. (A) ● (C) (D)
FD 2. (A) ● (C) (D)
US 3. (A) (B) (C) ●
CE 4. (A) (B) ● (D)
CC 5. ● (B) (C) (D)
MP 6. (A) ● (C) (D)
WM 7. (A) (B) ● (D)
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)
FL 11. (A) (B) (C) ●
RM 12. (A) (B) ● (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 3

MI 1. (A) (B) ● (D)
FD 2. (A) ● (C) (D)
US 3. ● (B) (C) (D)
CE 4. (A) ● (C) (D)
CC 5. (A) ● (C) (D)
MP 6. (A) (B) ● (D)
WM 7. (A) (B) ● (D)
CI 8. (A) ● (C) (D)
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)
RM 12. (A) ● (C) (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 5

MI 1. (A) (B) (C) ●
FD 2. (A) ● (C) (D)
US 3. (A) ● (C) (D)
CE 4. ● (B) (C) (D)
CC 5. (A) ● (C) (D)
MP 6. ● (B) (C) (D)
WM 7. (A) (B) (C) ●
CI 8. (A) ● (C) (D)
FO 9. (A) (B) ● (D)
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)
RM 12. (A) ● (C) (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 2

MI 1. (A) (B) (C) ●
FD 2. (A) (B) (C) ●
US 3. ● (B) (C) (D)
CE 4. (A) (B) (C) ●
CC 5. (A) ● (C) (D)
MP 6. (A) ● (C) (D)
WM 7. ● (B) (C) (D)
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)
FO 9. (A) (B) ● (D)
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)
FL 11. ● (B) (C) (D)
RM 12. ● (B) (C) (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 4

MI 1. (A) (B) (C) ●
FD 2. (A) (B) (C) ●
US 3. (A) (B) ● (D)
CE 4. (A) (B) ● (D)
CC 5. ● (B) (C) (D)
MP 6. (A) ● (C) (D)
WM 7. (A) ● (C) (D)
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)
FO 9. (A) ● (C) (D)
AP 10. (A) (B) (C) ●
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)
RM 12. (A) ● (C) (D)