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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.

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- **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.

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- **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 fable by Aesop. Then answer questions about the fable.  
Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 12.**

## **Two Travellers and the Bear**

Two men were travelling on foot, each from a different direction. At the same time, they arrived at the edge of a dark forest. Since their journey would take them deep into the forest, each man was nervous about travelling alone. They decided to make their journey together. Two people would surely be safer travelling through the forest than either person would be travelling alone.

The first of the travellers, the one who had suggested that the two travel together, was a light and nimble fellow. He knew all kinds of lively songs and humorous stories. He was ready to share a laugh at almost any time. There wasn't anything he couldn't make into a joke. Just walking along through the forest seemed to fill him with enthusiasm. His stride was practically a hopping little dance.

The second traveller was slower, but solid and strong. He looked neither to the right nor the left as he walked. Instead, he kept a steady, determined pace. He could never remember jokes he'd heard, and wouldn't have been able to tell them well, even if he had. He considered himself a fair fiddle player, but he wasn't able to carry even a single note. Having neither a fiddle in his bag, nor any stories in his head, he was grateful to have a companion, especially one so entertaining.

As the two men walked through the deep shadows of the forest, they heard a rustling in the thickets.

'I'm sure it's nothing,' said the first traveller, trying not to appear frightened. He then began to tell a joke.

'Well, then it's a very large nothing!' shouted the second traveller as a savage bear came charging out of a thicket. The first man broke off the joke he was telling, screamed for help, and headed for the trees as fast as his feet could carry him. The bear tried to catch him, but the man was too quick for the beast. In short order, the man was safely up a tree, clinging to a delicate branch. The bear started up the tree after him but then changed its mind. Instead, the bear turned its attention to the second man.

The second man had faced a similar situation in the past. He knew that running was out of the question. He was too slow, and the bear could certainly outrun him. If he tried to fight the bear, he would not win. Instead, he dropped to the ground and lay there holding his breath, hoping that the bear would not attack.

### Finding Main Idea

1. The fable is mostly about
- Ⓐ two travellers who become best friends.
  - Ⓑ the meaning of friendship.
  - Ⓒ a bear that gives advice to strangers.
  - Ⓓ a bear that likes to frighten travellers.

### Recognising Cause and Effect

4. In the beginning, why was the second man grateful to have the first man as a companion?
- Ⓐ because his companion knew the forest well
  - Ⓑ because his companion knew about bears
  - Ⓒ because his companion was entertaining
  - Ⓓ because his companion played the fiddle

### Recalling Facts and Details

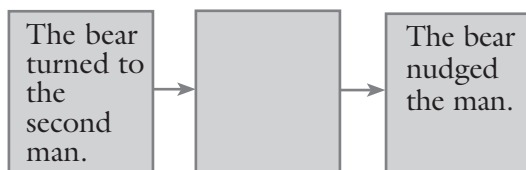
2. Before they entered the forest, both travellers felt
- Ⓐ shy.
  - Ⓑ lonely.
  - Ⓒ nervous.
  - Ⓓ enthusiastic.

### Comparing and Contrasting

5. In the fable, the first traveller's stride is compared to a
- Ⓐ laugh.
  - Ⓑ dance.
  - Ⓒ song.
  - Ⓓ fiddle.

### Understanding Sequence

3. The timeline describes some of the things that happened in the fable.



What belongs in the empty box?

- Ⓐ The bear sniffed at the second man's head.
- Ⓑ The bear tried to climb the tree.
- Ⓒ The second man dropped to the ground.
- Ⓓ The second man sat up and looked around.

### Making Predictions

6. Predict what will happen after the two men finish their journey.
- Ⓐ The second man will want to continue the friendship.
  - Ⓑ Both men will agree to travel together again.
  - Ⓒ The first man will return to the woods to face the bear alone.
  - Ⓓ The two men will go their separate ways.

# 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	= _____ %
Summarising	(SM)	_____ out of 5	= _____ %



*Comprehensive Assessment  
of Reading Strategies II, Book D  
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  
SM = Summarising

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

**LESSON 1**

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

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

**LESSON 3**

MI 1. (A) (B) ● (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) ● (C) (D)  
FO 9. (A) (B) ● (D)  
AP 10. (A) ● (C) (D)  
FL 11. ● (B) (C) (D)  
SM 12. (A) (B) (C) ●

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

**LESSON 5**

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

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

**LESSON 2**

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. ● (B) (C) (D)  
CI 8. (A) (B) ● (D)  
FO 9. (A) (B) (C) ●  
AP 10. ● (B) (C) (D)  
FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)  
SM 12. ● (B) (C) (D)

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

**LESSON 4**

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