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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 folktale from the islands of Fiji. Then answer questions about the folktale. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

Long ago, the small Pacific island of Kambara was infested with thousands upon thousands of mosquitoes. The islanders were worn out and weary of trying to avoid being bitten by the pesky insects. Things were worse in the evening after the sun had gone down. That's when the insects appeared in droves. During the day, the women of the island spent long hours making screens to keep the mosquitoes at bay.

Now it happened that a prince from the island of Oneata was sailing through the South Pacific in search of treasures to bring back to his people. One day, he landed on Kambara, where he was welcomed by the chief as an honoured guest. After enjoying a great feast, the chief showed the prince to a room where he could sleep for the night. All around the room hung beautifully painted cloth screens. The prince had never seen anything like them before.

'Tell me, chief,' said the prince, 'why do you hang such lovely cloth all about the room?'

'That is for the mosquitoes,' replied the chief.

'Mosquitoes? What are mosquitoes?' asked the prince.

'Mosquitoes are . . . our little friends of the night. They come out each evening and . . . sing us to sleep. They are like a tiny chorus,' said the chief. He was too embarrassed to reveal the truth, especially to a prince.

'How nice,' said the prince. 'We have nothing like mosquitoes on Oneata.'

'That is unfortunate,' said the chief. 'We happen to have more than we need.'

The prince yawned and excused himself to retire for the night. Just as he began to fall asleep, the night air filled with the hum and buzz of hungry mosquitoes swarming outside the screens. 'Such a soothing, peaceful sound,' the prince muttered. 'Mosquitoes are a rare treasure, indeed.'

The next morning, the prince approached the chief and asked if he could take some mosquitoes back to Oneata with him.



<p>Finding Main Idea</p> <p>1. A good name for the folktale is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) 'Mosquito Island'. (B) 'The Bargain'. (C) 'A Clever Prince'. (D) 'Little Friends of the Night'. 	<p>Recognising Cause and Effect</p> <p>4. The prince was travelling through the South Pacific in order to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) seek treasures for his people. (B) find a new home for his people. (C) trade goods with other islanders. (D) collect insects to bring back to his island.
<p>Recalling Facts and Details</p> <p>2. In the folktale, when are the mosquitoes most annoying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) after a rain (B) before the sun rises (C) after the sun goes down (D) in the early morning hours 	<p>Comparing and Contrasting</p> <p>5. The chief compares the mosquitoes to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) a dance. (B) a chorus. (C) an orchestra. (D) a song.
<p>Understanding Sequence</p> <p>3. The boxes tell about some of the things that happened in the folktale.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 20px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 150px;">The prince arrives on the island.</div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">→</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 150px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"></div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">→</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 150px;">The prince enjoys the soothing sounds of the mosquitoes.</div> </div> </div> <p>What belongs in the empty box?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The people set a trap for the mosquitoes. (B) The prince asks the chief if he could have some mosquitoes. (C) The chief and the prince strike a deal. (D) The prince is welcomed with a great feast. 	<p>Making Predictions</p> <p>6. What will most likely happen soon after the prince releases the mosquitoes on his own island?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) The people and the mosquitoes will live together peacefully. (B) The people will enjoy the night sounds of the mosquitoes. (C) The mosquitoes will leave the island in search of victims. (D) The mosquitoes will begin to annoy the people.

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 E
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) (C) ●
- CE 4. ● (B) (C) (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) (B) ● (D)
- FL 11. (A) (B) ● (D)
- SM 12. (A) ● (C) (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 3

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

Date: _____

LESSON 2

- MI 1. (A) ● (C) (D)
- FD 2. (A) ● (C) (D)
- 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) (C) ●
- FO 9. (A) (B) (C) ●
- AP 10. (A) (B) ● (D)
- FL 11. (A) ● (C) (D)
- SM 12. (A) (B) ● (D)

Date: _____

LESSON 4

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

Date: _____

LESSON 5

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