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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 Word Meaning in Context**

   Sometimes when you read, you find a word whose meaning you do not know. Often you can tell the meaning of the word by the way the word is used in the sentence. This is called understanding word meaning in context. Questions about meaning in context ask you to find the meaning of a word that may not be familiar to you. If you have trouble choosing an answer for a question like this, try each answer choice in the sentence where the word appears in the passage. See which answer choice makes the most sense.

- **Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences**

   When you read, many times you must figure out things on your own. The author doesn't always tell you everything. For example, you might read these sentences: 'The moon cast an eerie glow in Jake's room. Suddenly, he saw a shadow by the window. Jake sat up in bed, frozen with fear.' From what the author has written, you can tell that it is probably night-time, because the moon is out and Jake is in bed. Questions about drawing conclusions often contain the key words *you can tell* or *probably*.

- **Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion**

   Questions about facts and opinions ask you to find which statements are fact statements and which statements are opinion statements. Remember, a fact is something that is true. An opinion tells how a person feels about something. Facts can be proven. Opinions cannot. Statements that are opinions often contain key words such as *most, best, nicest* and *greatest*.

Read this myth from ancient Greece. Then answer questions about the myth. Choose the best answer for Numbers 1 to 12.

Aegeus, the much beloved and respected king of Athens, often went travelling about the countryside. One year he journeyed far to the south where he met a woman named Aethra. Aegeus and Aethra fell in love, married and eventually had a child whom they named Theseus.

Aegeus took great pride in spending time far from his kingdom with his wife and son. But soon his responsibilities as king weighed heavy. Aegeus's first duties were to the people under his rule. Aegeus knew that his return to Athens was imminent and that he would have to leave his family behind.

'Perhaps our eyes will never again meet,' Aegeus said to his wife, 'but I hope one day to be reunited with my son. I shall leave my sandals and my sword here, under the heaviest of stones. If, when the boy grows up, he is strong enough to lift the stone, then he should take the sword and the sandals and bring them to me in Athens. Then I shall know that the young man is Theseus and that he is worthy to inherit my throne.'

Aegeus tried to console his wife, but there was no comfort to be found in their parting. Aegeus returned to his palace in Athens, leaving Aethra to raise young Theseus alone, which Aethra did with much dedication and love. In time, Theseus grew to be a fine young man with all the might of a mountain. When he was ready, his mother brought him to the stone and explained what his father had done years before. Theseus easily raised the stone and removed the sandals and sword from underneath. He then put on his father's sandals and secured his father's sword around his waist.
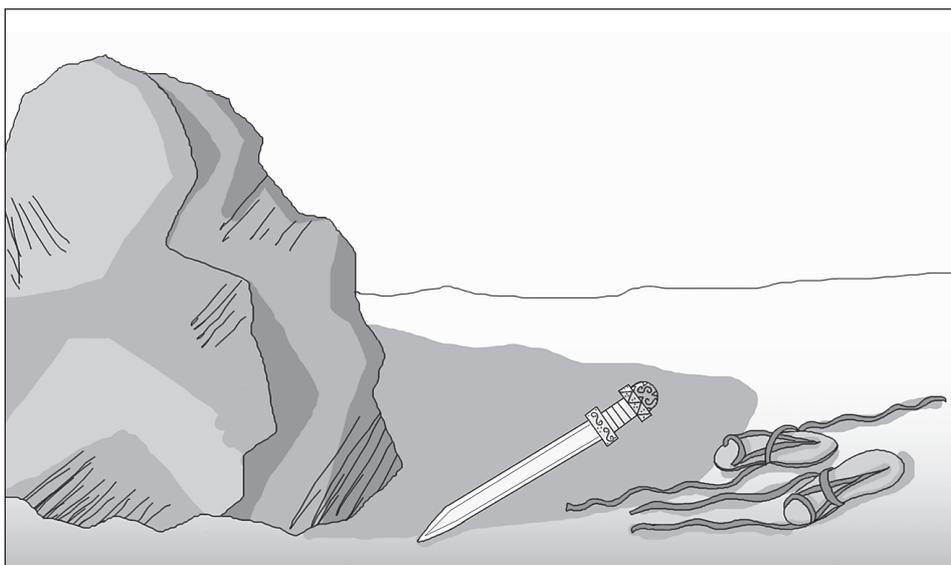
Finding Main Idea

1. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?

   Ⓐ Theseus takes a dangerous route to Athens.
   Ⓑ Theseus's mother grieves over her son's departure.
   Ⓒ Theseus learns he must go to find his father.
   Ⓓ Theseus bravely confronts several monsters.

Recognising Cause and Effect

4. Why did Aegeus return to Athens?

   Ⓐ because he could no longer care for his wife and child
   Ⓑ because he had to return to his kingdom
   Ⓒ because there was trouble in the city
   Ⓓ because Aethra demanded that he return

Recalling Facts and Details

2. Inside Procrustes's den Theseus found

   Ⓐ a sword.
   Ⓑ a giant turtle.
   Ⓒ coins and jewels.
   Ⓓ gold and silver.

Comparing and Contrasting

5. In the myth, Theseus's strength is compared to a

   Ⓐ monster.
   Ⓑ stone.
   Ⓒ pillar.
   Ⓓ mountain.

Understanding Sequence

3. The boxes show some of the events in Theseus's life.

Theseus travels to Athens.	→	Theseus slays many monsters.	→	
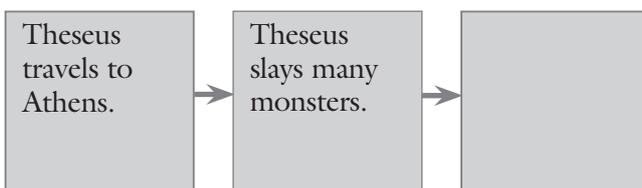
   What belongs in the empty box?

   Ⓐ Theseus easily lifts the stone.
   Ⓑ Theseus and his mother say good-bye.
   Ⓒ Theseus faces one of the most feared monsters of all.
   Ⓓ Theseus grows into a strong and brave young man.

Making Predictions

6. Predict what will happen if Theseus meets a monster more dangerous than Procrustes.

   Ⓐ Theseus will go into hiding.
   Ⓑ Theseus will fail to defeat the monster.
   Ⓒ Theseus will slay the monster.
   Ⓓ Theseus will call on the people of Athens for help.

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	= _____ %

Class Performance Chart

Next to each student's name, record the number of correct responses (out of 5) for each strategy. Then total the responses to determine the overall number of correct responses (out of 60) for each student.

Reading Strategies

Student	MI	FD	US	CE	CC	MP	WM	CI	FO	AP	FL	SM	Total

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II, Book H
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

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

Date: _____

LESSON 2

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

Date: _____

LESSON 3

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

Date: _____

LESSON 4

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

Date: _____

LESSON 5

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