

SUPPORTING RESEARCH



CARS® Series



COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF READING STRATEGIES II

- MEASURES IMPROVEMENT IN READING COMPREHENSION AFTER INSTRUCTION
- IDENTIFIES LEVEL OF MASTERY FOR 12 READING STRATEGIES
- PROVIDES PRACTICE WITH SELF-ASSESSMENT





CARS[®] Series II

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies

A Diagnostic Reading Program

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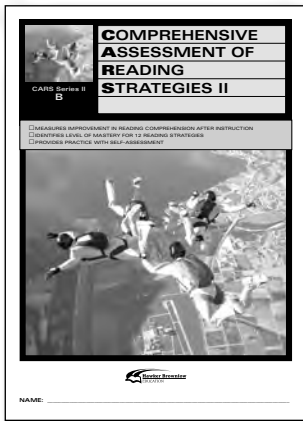
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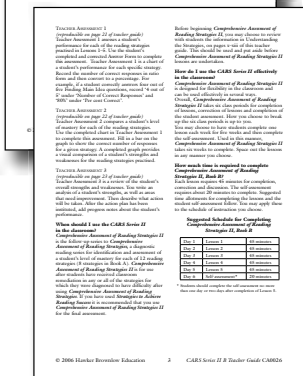
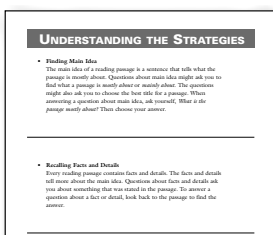
INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies II (CARS® Series II) is the assessment component 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 organizational design of the **CARS® Series II** is grounded in several areas of research: reading comprehension, metacognition and self-assessment, and effectiveness of classroom assessment.

TEACHER PREPARATION

“A prepared teacher knows what to teach, how to teach and has command of the subject matter being taught” (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). The **CARS® Series II** helps teachers achieve this goal through several features in the teacher guide that offer reading-strategy support.

1. Understanding the Strategies—A skills-review summary for teachers that may also be used as a reading-strategy reinforcement tool for students.
2. Suggestions and Instructions for Using CARS® Series II in the Classroom— Teachers receive instructional support for implementing the **CARS® Series II** program. Suggestions include pacing and timing of the program



THE 12 READING STRATEGIES

The **CARS® Series II** provides assessment information of students’ understanding of the 12 core reading strategies they 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 **CARS® Series II** encompasses essential reading skills that pertain to text structures in 5 lessons. Learning how to understand main ideas has considerable research support.

READING STRATEGY	BOOK LEVELS							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Finding Main Idea	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recalling Facts and Details	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distinguishing Between Real and Make-believe		✓	✓					
Understanding Sequence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recognizing Cause and Effect	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comparing and Contrasting		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Making Predictions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Finding Word Meaning in Context	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identifying Author's Purpose			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interpreting Figurative Language			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Summarizing				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading Pictures	✓							

Kameenui & Simmons (1998) provide an extensive overview of main idea research: "The ability to identify main topics, significant supporting information, and interrelations among a text's main ideas are processes that appear central to comprehension" (Lorch & Lorch, cited in Seidenberg, 1989; Miller & Kintsch, cited in Seidenberg, 1989). "Textbook main idea studies suggest instruction in techniques for locating main ideas to be valuable for improved textbook comprehension, especially in dealing with difficult passages" (O'Hear & Aikman, 1996). Warren and Fitzgerald (1997) summarize the importance of main idea reading instruction: It is commonly believed

that identification or generation of main ideas and supporting details is crucial to making meaning while reading and to recall after reading (Hare & Milligan, 1984; Memory, 1983). There is evidence of a clear positive relationship between main-idea knowledge and overall understanding from reading (Baumann, 1984; Winograd, 1984). However, many poorer readers do not configure main ideas and details well (Bridge, Belmore, Moskow, Cohen, & Matthews, 1984; Brown & Day, 1983; Winograd, 1984). Such students might profit from help from others in identifying and generating main ideas and details in expository text. Several intervention approaches, such as direct instruction in getting main ideas, have been shown to enhance fifth graders' through college students' ability to get main ideas when reading (Alvermann, 1982; Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1987; Baumann, 1984; Bridge, Belmore, Moskow, Cohen, & Matthews, 1984; Guri-Rozenblit, 1989; Memory, 1983; Moore & Cunningham, 1984; Williams, 1986).

In another literature review, Kameenui & Simmons (1998, p. 255) offer the following reasons why Understanding Sequence, Recognizing Cause and Effect, and Comparing and Contrasting are critical reading strategies. "Student awareness of structural patterns in expository writing (e.g., sequence, causation, comparison/contrast) facilitated recall of not only more text information, but more theses or main ideas" (Seidenberg, 1989). The reading strategies Understanding Sequence and Finding Details are easier to teach because they are more literal. The reading strategies Making Predictions and Drawing Conclusions are abstract inference reading strategies and more difficult to teach. "Inferencing is a natural part of language use, usually based on children's knowledge of the world (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). To get children to be better able to make inferences during reading may involve little more than encouraging them to do so. Hansen (1981) found that increasing the percentage

TEACHER ASSESSMENT 2
 Complete this page after the student has completed Lessons 1-5.
 Student's Name: _____ Date: _____
 Teacher's Name: _____

Comparing Levels of Mastery
 Use the chart on Teacher Assessment 1 to complete the graph below. For each reading strategy, shade the number correct to form a bar. A completed bar graph compares a student's level of mastery for each reading strategy.

TEACHER ASSESSMENT 3
 Complete this page after the student has completed Lessons 1-5.
 Student's Name: _____ Date: _____
 Teacher's Name: _____

Analysis of Reading Strategies
 Use the information displayed on the bar graph to complete the following.
 Strategies where the student shows strength: _____
 Strategies where the student needs improvement: _____
 Action Plan: _____
 Progress Notes: _____

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The CARS® Series II provides a reliable diagnosis of a student's understanding of 12 reading strategies.

SELF-ASSESSMENT
 Student's Name: _____ Date: _____
 Teacher's Name: _____

Complete this page after you have completed Lessons 1-5.

- You have completed Lessons 1-5. Explain how well you think you did.
- Complete this sentence: I could have done an even better job on Lessons 1-5 if _____.
- Did any part of the reading passages or questions give you trouble? _____
 If so, what kind of trouble did you have? _____
- Did you find any part of the reading passages or questions easier than you thought you would? _____
 Why do you think this is so? _____
- How would you rate your work on Lessons 1-5? Circle your answer.
 successful somewhat successful needs improvement

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Students actively evaluate and monitor their reading performance.

of inferential questions asked during a lesson was just as effective as a direct instruction inference training program in improving children's ability to answer inference questions" (Stahl, 1998, p. 44). Researchers have proven that these core reading strategies are essential in gaining reading comprehension.

These core reading strategies are essential because of the difficulty students experience with different styles of language. With the **CARS® Series II**, teachers are able to plot a clear road map of reading instruction for each student.

METACOGNITION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

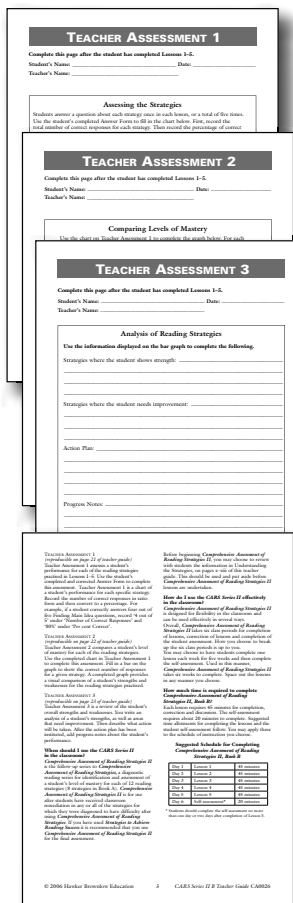
Metacognitive training in reading is proven to be an effective instructional technique. "Good readers often will reflect on what they have just read, perhaps evaluating the credibility of the material. . . . Monitoring also occurs at the conclusion of a reading. Thus, good readers can be aware of whether their understanding of the text is consistent with all the ideas expressed in it" (Pressley, 2002, p. 297).

"Gains on learning and intelligence measures were noted in response to providing instruction in a variety of specific techniques, including metacognition (self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-regulating)" (Cotton, 1991).

The **CARS® Series II** employs metacognitive questioning in the form of a student self-assessment. The self-questioning in the student assessment provides an awareness of the student's knowledge about a concept or strategy. Students must sort, organize, and consolidate 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 recognize the reading strategies that need improvement. Trimble, Gay, and Matthews (2005) summarize 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).



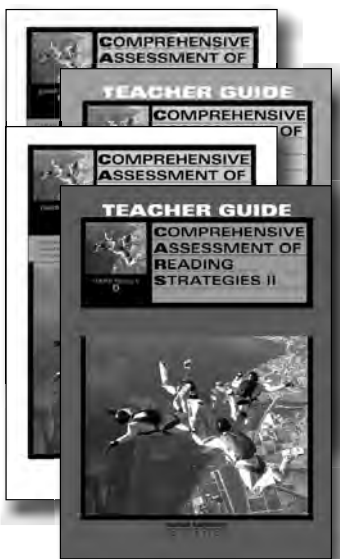
The Teacher Assessments may be completed at the end of the program as an overview of each student's performance. The Teacher Assessments provide teachers with a tool for diagnosing areas of strength or areas where improvement is needed with the 12 core reading strategies. Teachers are also able to use this information to construct a visual aid—a bar graph—so that levels of mastery can be easily compared. Teachers then communicate in writing the results of assessments so that an instructional plan can be completed. Teachers may also use the Class Performance Chart to track the overall assessment results of the students in their classroom.

CARS® Series 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). Schunk (1991) points out "[P]erhaps the most efficient way for supplemental programs to address reading efficacy issues would be to incorporate a few minutes each day (for small group formats) or each week (for one-on-one programs) where the teacher meets with students individually to discuss progress."

Teachers may follow either the recommended schedule of assessments or they may structure the program to fit their individual classroom needs

SUMMARY

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies Series II is an effective tool that provides teachers with immediate feedback on students' reading strengths and weaknesses. This information allows teachers to focus their instructional goals to gain maximum student learning. Students are engaged with their learning progress through metacognitive self-assessments. Students are motivated to think about their reading performance and the acquisition of reading strategies. Teachers can be assured of student engagement because **CARS® Series II** delivers quick assessment results regarding individual student performances, enabling students to take an active role in monitoring their own learning.



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