

A Meta Analysis of Informal Literacy Inventories Including the New Diagnostic Literacy Inventory

Stephanie L. McAndrews, Ph.D.

Reading and Early Literacy Professor

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

Curriculum and Instruction Box 1122

Edwardsville, Illinois 62026

smcandr@siue.edu

Abstract:

There are many important decisions that a teacher needs to make in order to facilitate student's literacy development. To make informed instructional decisions, it is necessary to select and administer literacy assessments that will provide specific information about each student's literacy strengths and needs. This study encompasses the history and comparison of thirteen published informal literacy assessments as well as one developed by the author, and identifies the instructional information that can be derived from the student data. The inventories are compared based on the following criteria: description and purpose of each test, administration of each test, scoring of tests, interpretation of the results, and implications for instruction. This article will compare and contrast the following informal reading inventories:

The Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory, 3rd Edition: Stieglitz, E. (2002). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (Originally published in 1992)

Qualitative Reading Inventory-3: Leslie, L. and Caldwell, J. (2001). New York: Longman.

(Originally published in 1990)

Basic Reading Inventory, 8th Edition: Johns, J. (2001). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

(Originally published in 1978)

Ekwall/Shanker Reading Inventory, 4th Edition: Shanker, J. and Ekwall, E. (2000). Needham

Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. (Originally published in 1979)

Analytical Reading Inventory, 5th Edition: Woods, M. and Moe, A.. (1989). Englewood Cliffs,

NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. (Originally published in 1977)

Reading Miscue Inventory Manual: Procedure for Diagnosis and Evaluation: Goodman, Y.

and Burke, C. (1972). New York: The Macmillan Company.

The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, 2nd Edition: Gates, A. and MacGinitie, W. (1978).

Chicago: Riverside Publishing Co. (Originally published in 1965. This is not an informal assessment, but is often used.)

Gilmore Oral Reading Test: Gilmore, J. and Gilmore, E. (1968). New York: Harcourt, Brace &

World, Inc. (Originally published in 1964).

Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty, 3rd Edition: Durrell, D. and Catterson, J. (1980). New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. (Originally published in 1937).

Gray Oral Reading Test: Gray, W. Edited by Robinson, H. (1963). Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc. (This standardized assessment was originally called the *Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs* which were developed in 1916 by William Gray)

For early literacy development, three other assessments will be described and analyzed:

Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy: Illinois State Board of Education, (2001). Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education.

Developmental Reading Assessment: Beaver, J. (2001). Parsippany, NJ: Celebration Press.

An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement: Clay, M. (1997) Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (Originally published in 1972 in *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties*, Clay, M).

Since the researcher was unable to find a single literacy inventory that met her student's instructional needs, she developed the **Diagnostic Literacy Inventory**, which will be described in detail and compared to the other assessments. This comprehensive literacy inventory, based on previous research, is beneficial for assessing the literacy development of kindergarten through sixth grade students. There are three primary differences between the Diagnostic Literacy Inventory and other inventories:

1. Multiple assessments are used to evaluate both the reading and writing processes.

2. The assessments provide for teacher and student self reflection.
3. Literacy instruction is based on the student's strengths and needs as identified during initial and on-going assessments.

The complete Diagnostic Literacy Inventory will be presented in this paper; however, elements of this inventory have been previously published by the author.

This research paper will provide specific details about each of the assessments including a matrix comparing them. This research is beneficial for classroom teachers or specialists to make informed decisions about which assessments to use, why you would administer them, and how the data can be used to plan literacy instruction. In addition, the Diagnostic Literacy Inventory will be introduced that provides the classroom teacher with additional insight into their student's reading and writing processing.

McAndrews, S.L. (2002). Enhancing reading strategies through teacher, peer, and self-assessment. *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, 30, 3, 32-41.

McAndrews, S.L. (2000, July). Asking questions: The impetus for theoretical and pedagogical change. In J. Loughran & T. Russell (Eds.), *Exploring myths and legends of teacher education. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices*, (pp.173-177). American Educational Research Association, East Sussex, UK.

McAndrews, S.L. (1998). *Reading Discovery: The development of an early literacy program through reflective practice and analysis*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services (9906513).