THE DESIGN OF DIAGNOSTIC READING MATERIALS FOR
SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE
USING ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING

by

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SYNOPSIS
THE DESIGN OF DIAGNOSTIC READING MATERIALS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LEARNERS IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE USING ENGLISH AS THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING

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Reading is a complex, communicative, integrative and interactive act and one of the most important skills any learner has to acquire in the formal learning situation. It forms a primary basis for learning.

Timeous identification of possible reading difficulties, with the emphasis on enhancing effective initial instruction rather than on providing learning support later, implies that the reading assessment of learners in the Foundation Phase should be regarded as an intrinsic part of the early instruction of reading.

Since no formal, locally developed English reading instrument exists for all South African learners in the Foundation Phase, the aim of the research was to develop diagnostic English reading materials for the heterogeneous population of South African learners in Grades 1 to 3 in English schools, to be used by the regular class teacher.

In order to design appropriate reading assessment materials, a literature survey was conducted on the latest developments in the theory of reading assessment and test construction. Theory was integrated with praxis and practice, using case studies to illustrate views adopted, resulting in syntheses for the requirements and criteria for the design of the diagnostic reading materials.

Two comparable sets of materials in the multiple-choice question format and a user’s manual were developed, starting with the recognition of initial letters in words and
progressing to complex paragraph reading, with the emphasis always on comprehension. A pilot study was conducted, items were refined and scrutinised by a panel of experts and the materials were experimentally administered to 726 learners at four schools.

The responses were coded, the data were captured and statistically computated, and an item analysis and selection, as well as a frequency distribution analysis of errors per error type were conducted. Conclusions were drawn from the findings.

The reading assessment materials were concluded to be practical, valid and reliable. In final form, the materials held the promise of valuable contributions to the understanding of reading development and reading difficulties.

Final recommendations were made concerning the final design and the administration and use of the materials.

KEY WORDS:

Initial / beginning reading
Foundation Phase
Reading-as-communication
Reading assessment materials
Cognitive reading approach
Metacognition
Schemata
All known aspects / components of reading
Interactive process
Integration
SAMEVATTING

DIE ONTWERP VAN DIAGNOSTIESE LEESMATERIAAL VIR SUID-AFRIKAANSE GRAAD 1 TOT 3 LEERLINGE IN ENGELSE SKOLE
deur
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Lees is 'n komplekse kommunikatiewe handeling wat onder andere 'n integrasie van laer en hoër kognitiewe vaardighede behels, asook 'n interaktiewe rol tussen die ouer, teks, inhoud en die leser impliseer. Metakognitiewe betrokkenheid en die gebruik van skemata is noodsaaklik vir suksesvolle lees. Lees is een van die belangrikste vaardighede wat in die formele skoolopset aangeleer moet word.

Vroeë identifikasie van leerlinge met moontlike leesprobleme, met die oog op voortkomende en effektiewe klasonderrig in plaas van ondersteunende/remediërende/ korrektiewe hulpverlening later, is 'n nasionale prioriteit in Suid-Afrika wat die belangrike rol wat klasassessering behoort te speel, bevestig.

Aangesien daar 'n bewese behoefte bestaan vir 'n Suid-Afrikaans ontwikkelde leesinstrument vir Graad 1 tot 3 leerders in Engelse laerskole, is die doel van hierdie navorings om leesmateriaal vir hierdie groep leerders te ontwerp, wat deur die klasonderwyser ingeskakel kan word.

'N Literatuurstudie is gedaan ten aansien van resente leesteorieë, assessoringsmodelle en toetsontwikkeling. Die teorie is op 'n geïntegreerde wyse aangebied met die praktyk, en die voortspruitende vereistes of kriteria waaraan die leesmateriaal moet voldoen, is by wyse van sintese aangedui.

Twee vergelykbare stelle leesmateriaal in veelvuldige-keuseformaat en 'n uitvoerige gebruikershandleiding is ontwerp. Die leesmateriaal begin met die herkenning van aanvangsklank in woorde en eindig etlike afdelings later met die lees van relatief
komplekse paragrawe. Die klem is deurgaans geplaas op leesbegrip, selfs in afdelings waarin losstaande woorde geleë word.

‘n Loodsonderzoek is gedoen, items is verder vervyn en goedgekeur deur ‘n paneel deskundiges. ‘n Eksperimentele toepassing is uitgevoer op 726 leerders in vier Engelse skole. Die antwoorde is gekodeer en die data is ingepons en statisties verwerk. Itemanalises en seleksie, asook ‘n analise van die frekwensieverspreiding van foutie per fout-tipe is uitgevoer. Gevolgtrekkings is vanaf die bevindings geformuleer.

Daar is bevind dat die diagnostiese leesmateriaal prakties, geldig en betroubaar is. In die finale vorm hou die materiaal belofte in van ‘n waardevolle bydrae tot die begriping van leesontwikkeling en leesprobleme.

Finale aanbevelings met betrekking tot die finale ontwerp en die toepassing en benutting van die leesmateriaal is gemaak.

SLEUTELWOORDE

Aanvangslees
Lees-as-kommunikasie
Leesassesseringsmateriaal
Kognitiewe leesbenadering
Leesbegrip
Metakognisie
Skemata
Alle bekende aspekte / komponente van lees
Interaktiewe leesproses
Integrasie
CONTENTS

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