



**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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A.J. de JONGH

## **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 computed, 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

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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 outeur, 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 voorkomende 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 navorsing om leesmateriaal vir hierdie groep leerders te ontwerp, wat deur die klasonderwyser ingeskakel kan word.

'n Literatuurstudie is gedoen ten aansien van resente leesteorieë, assesseringsmodelle 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 aanvangsklanke 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 gelees word.

‘n Loodsondersoek is gedoen, items is verder verfyn 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 analyse van die frekwensieverspreiding van foute 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 begryping 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



<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>SYNOPSIS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>SAMEVATTING</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>FIGURES</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>TABLES</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>1.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>1.2.1 Orthodidactic dynamics of assessment</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2.2 Content and skills addressed</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2.3 Test development</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2.4 Utilisation of test results</b> .....	<b>7</b>
(1) <u>The teacher</u> .....	<b>7</b>
(2) <u>The learner</u> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4.1 Literature review</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4.2 Case Studies and Field Notes</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.4.3 The development of diagnostic English reading materials</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.5 RESEARCH STATEMENT</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.6.1 Learning-to-read</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.6.2 Diagnostic reading materials for learners in the Foundation</b>	
<b>Phase</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>1.6.3 Foundation Phase</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.6.4 English Second Language speakers (L2)</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.7 PROGRAMME OF STUDY</b> .....	<b>13</b>

## CHAPTER TWO

<b>2.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO READING INSTRUCTION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.2.1</b>	<b>The Whole Language Approach in the Beginning Reading Phase.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.2.2</b>	<b>The Phonological Approach in the Beginning Reading Phase .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2.2.3</b>	<b>The Cognitive Approach in the Beginning Reading Phase .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>READING ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.3.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>2.3.2</b>	<b>The reading assessment materials design .....</b>	<b>58</b>
(1)	<u>The reading construct .....</u>	<b>58</b>
(2)	<u>Defining reading .....</u>	<b>58</b>
(3)	<u>Components of the reading act to be assessed .....</u>	<b>59</b>
<b>2.3.3</b>	<b>Measurement (testing) and assessment in education .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>CONVENTIONAL AND CURRENT VIEWS ON METHODS OF ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2.4.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2.4.2</b>	<b>Indirect, conventional or standardised methods of assessment .....</b>	<b>66</b>
(1)	<u>Orientation .....</u>	<b>66</b>
(2)	<u>Indirect testing using multiple-choice items .....</u>	<b>69</b>
(3)	<u>Norm-referenced tests .....</u>	<b>71</b>
(4)	<u>Criterion-referenced tests .....</u>	<b>72</b>
(5)	<u>Criticism against conventional standardised testing .....</u>	<b>73</b>
<b>2.4.3</b>	<b>Direct, alternative methods of assessment .....</b>	<b>76</b>
(1)	<u>Orientation .....</u>	<b>76</b>
(2)	<u>Informal or nonstandardized assessment .....</u>	<b>77</b>
(3)	<u>Authentic or performance assessment .....</u>	<b>79</b>
(4)	<u>Dynamic assessment .....</u>	<b>82</b>
(5)	<u>Leading modern approaches to Dynamic testing .....</u>	<b>88</b>
(6)	<u>Limitations of Direct methods of testing .....</u>	<b>90</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS OF TEST DESIGN .....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2.5.1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>90</b>

2.5.2	Reliability .....	90
2.5.3.	Validity .....	92
(1)	<u>Content validity</u> .....	93
(2)	<u>Criterion-related validity</u> .....	94
(3)	<u>Construct validity</u> .....	95
2.5.4	Practicability or test efficiency .....	96
2.6	<b>CONCLUSION : SYNTHESIS</b> .....	97
2.6.1	<b>Requirements for the test design</b> .....	97
2.6.2	<b>The diagnostic reading materials for South African learners in the Foundation Phase using English as the language of learning.</b> .....	112
 <b>CHAPTER THREE</b>		
3.1	<b>ORIENTATION: FIRST RESEARCH PHASE</b> .....	114
3.1.1	<b>Introduction</b> .....	114
3.1.2	<b>Research design</b> .....	115
(1)	<u>Literature review</u> .....	115
(2)	<u>Test construction</u> .....	115
(3)	<u>Experimental administration</u> .....	115
(4)	<u>Item selection and frequency analysis</u> .....	116
3.1.3	<b>The assessment model</b> .....	116
(1)	<u>Outcomes-based instruction and assessment</u> .....	116
(2)	<u>Criterion-referenced assessment</u> .....	116
(3)	<u>Authentic, alternative, formative, continuous and dynamic assessment</u> ....	117
(4)	<u>The range of reading skills and strategies assessed</u> .....	117
(5)	<u>Format and learner-friendliness of the instrument</u> .....	120
(6)	<u>The Whole Language, Phonological and Cognitive approaches to reading</u> .....	121
(7)	<u>The curriculum base of the reading materials</u> .....	121
3.2	<b>EXPERIMENTAL APPLICATION</b> .....	122
3.2.1	<b>Background to the experimental application of the reading materials</b> .....	122
3.2.2	<b>Subjects</b> .....	123
3.2.3	<b>Statistical procedures</b> .....	126

(1)	<u>Method of Item Analysis</u> .....	126
(2)	<u>The statistical properties of <i>Let us Read</i></u> .....	127
<b>3.2.4</b>	<b>Statistical analysis</b> .....	<b>130</b>
(1)	<u>Introduction</u> .....	130
(2)	<u>Discussion</u> .....	130
<b>3.3</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>168</b>
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>		
<b>4.1</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF INVESTIGATION</b> .....	<b>169</b>
<b>4.1.1</b>	<b>Orientation</b> .....	<b>169</b>
<b>4.1.2</b>	<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>169</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>170</b>
<b>4.2.1</b>	<b>Criteria for the development of diagnostic English reading materials</b> .....	<b>170</b>
<b>4.2.2</b>	<b>The experimental application</b> .....	<b>172</b>
(1)	<u>The sample selection</u> .....	172
(2)	<u>Practicability</u> .....	172
(3)	<u>Statistical data and information about the learners (school, age, gender performance, home language, socio-economic status</u> .....	173
<b>4.3</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>173</b>
<b>4.3.1</b>	<b>Administration and use of the instrument</b> .....	<b>173</b>
<b>4.3.2</b>	<b>Further research</b> .....	<b>174</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>175</b>
 <b>REFERENCES</b> .....		<b>176</b>
 <b>APPENDIX A : CASE STUDIES</b> .....		<b>189</b>
 <b>APPENDIX B : READING ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS</b> .....		<b>192</b>
 <b>APPENDIX C : STATISTICAL ANALYSES</b> .....		<b>197</b>



## FIGURES

<b>FIGURE 2.1 Recent trends in assessment : From content measurement to performance assessment .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>FIGURE 2.2 Comparison between dynamic and static assessment .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>FIGURE 3.1 Components of <i>Let us Read</i> (2 Forms – Form X (green) and Form Z (red) – for re-assessment .....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>FIGURE 3.2 Number of errors per error type .....</b>	<b>153</b>

## TABLES

<b>TABLE 3.1</b>	<b>Sample distribution .....</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>TABLE 3.2:</b>	<b>Data records per section of <i>Let us Read</i> .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>TABLE 3.3(i) :</b>	<b>ITEM ANALYSIS AND SELECTION : SUB-SET A1 - Recognition of initial consonants, Form X .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>TABLE 3.3(ii) :</b>	<b>ITEM ANALYSIS AND SELECTION : SUB-SET A1 - Recognition of initial consonants, Form Z .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>TABLE 3.4(i)</b>	<b>Frequency distribution of total scores: Sub-set 1 – Recognition of initial letters, Form X .....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>TABLE 3.4(ii)</b>	<b>Frequency distribution of total scores: Sub-set 1 – Recognition of initial letters, Form Z .....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>TABLE 3.5</b>	<b>Reliability coefficients, error of measurement, standard deviation and mean .....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>TABLE 3.6</b>	<b>Reliability coefficients, error of measurement, standard deviation and mean – Stories .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>TABLE 3.7</b>	<b>Difficulty levels : Number of items per 10% -range .....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>TABLE 3.8</b>	<b>Index of Discrimination .....</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>TABLE 3.9a:</b>	<b><u>b</u> x <u>d</u> x <u>p</u> x <u>q</u> reversals – Form X .....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>TABLE 3.9b:</b>	<b><u>b</u> x <u>d</u> x <u>p</u> x <u>q</u> reversals - Form Z .....</b>	<b>154</b>
<b>TABLE 3.10a:</b>	<b><u>f</u> x <u>t</u>; <u>n</u> x <u>u</u>; <u>w</u> x <u>m</u> reversals - Form X .....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>TABLE 3.10b:</b>	<b><u>f</u> x <u>t</u>; <u>n</u> x <u>u</u>; <u>w</u> x <u>m</u> reversals - Form Z .....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>TABLE 3.10c:</b>	<b><u>f</u> x <u>t</u> Ben and Tub .....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>TABLE 3.11a:</b>	<b>Word reversals – Form X .....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>TABLE 3.11b:</b>	<b>Word reversals - Form Z .....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>TABLE 3.12a:</b>	<b>Letter sequence - Form X .....</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>TABLE 3.12b:</b>	<b>Letter sequence - Form Z .....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>TABLE 3.12c:</b>	<b>Letter Sequence – <i>Lu and Jo</i>, and <i>Jim</i> .....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>TABLE 3.13a:</b>	<b>Visual discrimination - Form X .....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>TABLE 3.13b:</b>	<b>Visual discrimination - Form Z .....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>TABLE 3.14a:</b>	<b>Recognition of digraphs <u>th</u> x <u>wh</u> x <u>sh</u> x <u>ch</u> - Form X .....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>TABLE 3.14b:</b>	<b>Recognition of digraphs <u>th</u> x <u>wh</u> x <u>sh</u> x <u>ch</u> - Form Z .....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>TABLE 3.15a:</b>	<b>Auditory analysis and synthesis - Form X .....</b>	<b>159</b>

<b>TABLE 3.15b: Auditory analysis and synthesis - Form Z .....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>TABLE 3.16a: Schemata - Form X .....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>TABLE 3.16b: Schemata – <i>Lu and Jo</i> and <i>Jim</i> .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>TABLE 3.17a: Vocabulary - Form X .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>TABLE 3.17b: Vocabulary - Form Z .....</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>TABLE 3.18a: Comprehension - Form X .....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>TABLE 3.18b: Comprehension - Form Z .....</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>TABLE 3.19a: b/d/p/q reversals – Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>TABLE 3.19b: f/t, n/u, w/m reversals – Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i>.....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>TABLE 3.20: Sequential errors - Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>TABLE 3.21: Visual discrimination - Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>TABLE 3.22: Making inferences - Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>TABLE 3.23: Utilising schemata - Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>TABLE 3.24: Language - Grade 2 stories : <i>Pam and Birds</i> .....</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>TABLE 3.25: Visual discrimination - Grade 3 stories : <i>Bob and Matt</i> .....</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>TABLE 3.26: Making inferences - Grade 3 stories : <i>Bob and Matt</i> .....</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>TABLE 3.27: Utilising schemata - Grade 3 stories : <i>Bob and Matt</i> .....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>TABLE 3.28: Language - Grade 3 stories : <i>Bob and Matt</i> .....</b>	<b>167</b>