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A graded word list can be used to assess students' reading competence.

The Graded Word List: Quick Gauge of Reading Ability

MARGARET LA PRAY and RAMON ROSS

THE SAN DIEGO QUICK ASSESSMENT is a quick way to gauge a student's reading ability. It is a graded word list, formed by drawing words randomly from basal reader glossaries, and from the Thorndike list. Words initially were assigned levels according to these sources, with some shifting on the basis of students' responses.

The graded word list has two uses: 1) to determine a reading level; 2) to detect errors in word analysis. One can use the test information to group students for corrective practice or to select appropriate reading materials for those students.

The list is remarkably accurate when used for these purposes. During the last two years we have had students in our undergraduate reading classes give this test to children in our campus laboratory school. Following testing, we asked them to recommend appropriate reading levels for these children. In all but four cases out of more than one hundred, their recommendations coincided with those of the classroom teachers who had been working with these children for a large portion of the year.

The list, like other instruments, is not appropriate for all students. Among high school and adult groups, we find it most effective for those who have poor decoding skills. Junior high students need not be so disabled for this to be an effective instrument.

Administration

1. Type out each list of ten words on an index card.
2. Begin with a card that is at least two years below the student's grade level assignment.
3. Ask the student to read the words aloud to you. If he misreads any on the list, drop to easier lists until he makes no errors. This indicates the base level.

4. Write down all incorrect responses, or use diacritical marks on your copy of the test. For example, *lonely* might be read and recorded as *lovely*. *Apparatus* might be recorded as *a per' a tus*.
5. Encourage the student to read words he does not know so that you can identify the techniques he uses for word identification.
6. Have the student read from increasingly difficult lists until he misses at least three words.

<i>PP</i>	<i>Primer</i>	<i>1</i>
see	you	road
play	come	live
me	not	thank
at	with	when
run	jump	bigger
go	help	how
and	is	always
lock	work	night
can	are	spring
here	this	today
<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
our	city	decided
please	middle	served
myself	moment	amazed
town	frightened	silent
early	exclaimed	wrecked
send	several	improved
wide	lonely	certainly
believe	drew	entered
quietly	since	realized
carefully	straight	interrupted
<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>
scanty	bridge	amber
certainly	commercial	dominion
develop	abolish	sundry
considered	trucker	capillary
discussed	apparatus	impetuous
behaved	elementary	blight
splendid	comment	wrest
acquainted	necessity	enumerate
escaped	gallery	daunted
grim	relativity	condescend

8	9	10
capacious	conscientious	zany
limitation	isolation	jerkin
pretext	molecule	nausea
intrigue	ritual	gratuitous
delusion	momentous	linear
immaculate	vulnerable	inept
ascent	kinship	legality
acid	conservatism	aspen
binocular	jaunty	amnesty
embankment	inventive	barometer
11		
galore		
rotunda		
capitalism		
prevaricate		
risible		
exonerate		
supernuate		
luxuriate		
piebald		
crunch		

Analysis

1. The list in which a student misses no more than one of the ten words is the level at which he can read independently. Two errors indicate his instructional level. Three or more errors identify the level at which reading material will be too difficult for him.
2. An analysis of a student's errors is useful. Among those which occur with greatest frequency are the following:

<i>Error</i>	<i>Example</i>
reversal	ton for not
consonant	now for how
consonant clusters	state for straight
short vowel	cane for can
long vowel	wid for wide
prefix	improved for improved
suffix	improve for improved
miscellaneous	(accent, omission of syllables, etc.)
3. As with other reading tasks, teacher observation of student behavior is essential. Such things as posture, facial expression, and voice quality may signal restlessness, lack of assurance, or frustration while reading.