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School of Teacher Education
Canberra College of Advanced Education

REPORT ON THE USE OF A DRAFT MANUAL

FOR DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES IN READING

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A Field Study in Education Report
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PREFACE

The Field Study was designed to investigate some aspects of content validity of a specially designed Draft Manual for Diagnostic Procedures in Reading. A copy of the Manual is available separately, but relevant sections of it are appended to this Report.

The Draft Manual for Diagnostic Procedures in Reading (D.M.D.P.R.) was issued to seventeen students enrolled in the Graduate Diploma in Special Education. These students were completing the unit, Curriculum Design in Language and Reading. The D.M.D.P.R. was compiled as a trial testing instrument which could be used by the students in their course-work on diagnosis of reading difficulties. The manual contains three sections, listed below, which are germane to this study. This Report will focus upon the procedures of testing which were taught and practised in, and the results obtained from, trial testing by the writer and the students within the framework of the Curriculum Design in Language and Reading (C.D.L.R.) unit.

The three sections of the D.M.D.P.R. which are the subject of this study are:

1. Diagnostic Procedures in the Assessment of Reading Readiness.
2. A Rationale for the Measurement of Reading Performance.
3. The Principles, Procedures and Application of Miscue Analysis in the Diagnosis of Reading Difficulties.

The Report will describe and analyse the findings obtained from Sections 1 and 3, in which information has been obtained from

the course participants in their use of the D.M.D.P.R. Section 2, an article on theoretical issues in diagnosis of reading processes, was included in the D.M.D.P.R. to explain to the participants the rationale of miscue analysis techniques. The explanatory and descriptive nature of that section will be referred to in this Report for reference purposes only.

Report on Section 1

Section 1 of the D.M.D.P.R. is a series of five tests which were designed to trial a method of assessment of the developmental language and reading status of children aged between 5.6 and 7.5 years of age. The children were rated by their teachers in language and reading development on a five-point scale, which ranged from extremely poor, to below average, average, above average, and excellent.

The tests were administered to nearly 200 children and data was obtained from 137 of these.

The children comprise a sample who have been exposed to one, two or three years of reading readiness training and reading teaching in a wide variety of programs and systems.

The primary purpose of designing the tests was to use criteria of performance which do not commonly appear in standardized, normative tests of reading readiness and reading development. The rationale of the tests was stated in the D.M.D.P.R.

The Report reviews this rationale in Chapters I and II and the results obtained from the application of the trial tests in Chapter III.

Report on Section 3

Section 3 of the D.M.D.P.R. proposes a system of diagnostic testing in reading, known as Miscue Analysis.

The Report attempts to review, in descriptive terms, the patterns of error behaviour in reading which can be illustrated by the miscue analysis technique, and to describe the systems of analysis developed by the writer and unit participants in their investigations of 130 children who were described as low proficiency readers. This review is contained in Chapter IV.

Because the miscue analysis technique is diagnostic in purpose, it would be inappropriate to describe the Section 3 program as experimental or empirical. Several insights into the uses of the miscue analysis technique were developed progressively in the C.D.L.R. unit and these procedures and uses will be the subject of the report.

In summary, the overall purposes of the study were therefore two-fold:

1. to provide a group of specialist teachers in training with a manual of diagnostic procedures appropriate to the assessment of children's reading progress in early and later stages of reading development; and
2. to assess experimentally the validity of original test materials to be used in early reading stages, and to appraise descriptively the efficacy of a diagnostic procedure in reading in later reading stages.

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