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THE EFFECTS OF STAGING ON  
THE READER'S COMPREHENSION  
OF INFORMATIONAL DISCOURSE

by

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## ABSTRACT

The study was concerned with the variable of staging which is a component of text structure. Staging is known to affect the comprehension process of proficient readers.

Two passages developed and analysed for staging by Clements (1976) were used in this study to investigate the effects staging has on the readers' comprehension of the passages. The two passages were identical in content and different only in the staging level at which information occurred.

Ten experimental texts were developed from Clements' two passages. The texts enabled (i) the comparison of the effects of supplying high, medium or low staged information to the readers on their ability to replace cloze deletions in the rest of the text: and (ii) the comparison of the effects of supplying intact the staging categories Old Topic, New Topic, Old Comment, or New Comment on the readers' ability to replace cloze deletions in the rest of the text. The cloze replacement scores were taken as measures of the readers' comprehension of the text.

The subjects used in this study were a mixture of male and female, undergraduate and postgraduate students at Riverina College of Advanced Education.

The height of staged information and the staging category of the information were found to have no significant affect upon the readers' comprehension of the texts. However, it is suggested

that this may be an artifact of the use of cloze procedure as the measure of comprehension.

Suggestions are made for further research to clarify the usefulness of cloze as a research tool in this area and to support or reject the conclusion of this study.

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