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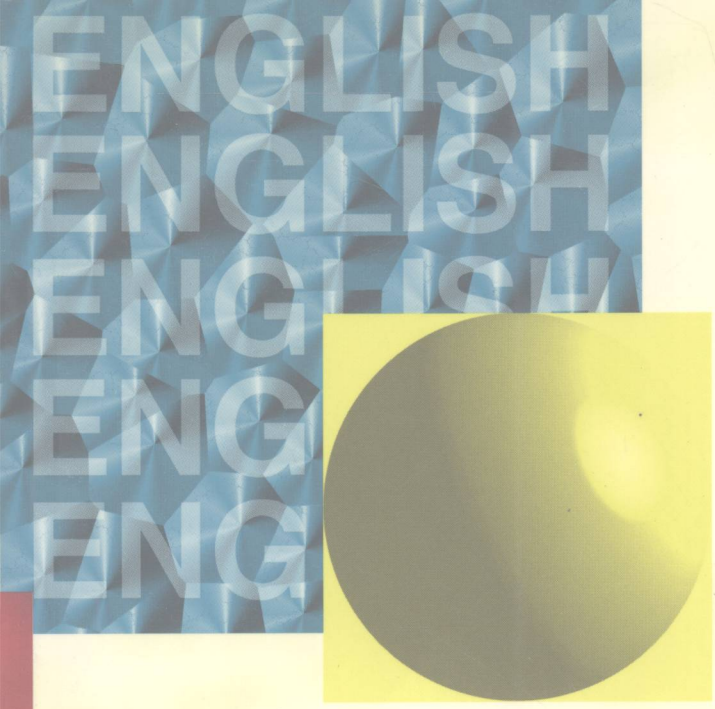

（泛读）

研究生英语教程

An English Course for Graduate Students (Extensive Reading)

下册

上海交通大学出版社

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下册

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前　言

1992年国家教委颁布了《非英语专业研究生英语教学大纲》(以下简称《教学大纲》),从此研究生英语教学进入了一个新的阶段。为了更好地贯彻执行《教学大纲》,落实《教学大纲》提出的指标和要求,我们编写了这套《研究生英语教程(泛读)》"*An English Course for Graduate Students* (*Extensive Reading*)"作为《研究生英语教程》的配套教材,供非英语专业研究生基础英语教学阶段使用。

《研究生英语教程(泛读)》严格按照《教学大纲》规定的教学目的编写,旨在提高研究生的英语阅读能力。《研究生英语教程(泛读)》分上下两册,下册共有12课,供一个学期使用。每一课由课文、阅读理解、练习(含词汇练习、完形填空、讨论题等)和快速阅读几部分内容组成。课文部分除课文以外,还有生词(生词前有一个星号的为博士生词汇,无标记的为硕士生词汇,有两个星号的为超纲词汇)、短语和词组、注释等;阅读理解主要帮助学生理解课文;词汇练习旨在帮助学生学习和巩固课文中出现的词汇和词组;讨论题主要是帮助研究生提高连贯表达自己思想和看法的能力。因为绝大多数的课文选材均具有较强的可思性,因此可以根据讨论题组织学生进行讨论或辩论;快速阅读主要是帮助学生提高阅读速度。

本教程的课文选自近年来英美出版的原版杂志和书籍,但对部分材料作了少量删节。选材语言规范,内容新颖,题材广泛,体裁多样,融科学性、知识性、趣味性、可思性和可读性于一体,引人

兴趣，发人深思，对开拓研究生的思路有一定的裨益。

《研究生英语教程(泛读)》下册由刘鸿章主编，王同顺、金朝亮、王亚平和王为明编写，美籍教师 Chrispher McInnes 和 Massela Tomas 审阅了全书。

由于编写的时间仓促，编写水平与经验有限，不妥之处，敬请广大读者批评指正。

编　者

1998 年 3 月

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Lesson 1

Text

The Merits of Measurement-Driven Instruction

W. James Popham

1 If properly conceived and implemented, measurement-driven instruction currently constitutes the most cost-effective way of improving the quality of public education in the United States. That is a pretty hefty claim. Let's see if the evidence supports it.

2 Of course, other effective ways of boosting the quality of public schooling exist. For example, if we were able to replace mediocre instructional materials with more potent, empirically proven alternatives, then pupils would surely benefit. Similarly, if we were to infuse into our current teaching force a host of well-paid, highly skilled teachers, we could surely expect major educational dividends.

3 But such strategies, though they are surely effective, are very costly. Because measurement-driven instruction (MDI) is an effective improvement strategy that is markedly less expensive, it is a far more cost-effective strategy for improving the quality of public schooling. It is a strategy for instructional improvement that American educators should consider seriously.

MDI Defined

4 Before I consider the arguments and evidence in favor of measurement-driven instruction, let me define some terms and set the stage. Starting with definitions, measurement-driven instruction oc-

curs when a high-stakes test of educational achievement, because of the important contingencies associated with the student's performance, influences the instructional program that prepares students for the test. There are two major types of high-stakes tests. One category consists of examinations that are associated with important consequences for examinees. Tests of this sort include those that qualify students for promotion to the next grade or for receipt of a high school diploma. The second type of high-stakes test consists of examinations whose scores are seen as reflections of instructional quality. Such tests include the many statewide achievement tests whose results are reported by local newspapers on a school-by-school or district-by-district basis.

5 Few educators would dispute the claim that these sorts of high-stakes tests markedly influence the nature of instructional programs. Whether they are concerned about their own self-esteem or their students' well-being, teachers clearly want students to perform well on such tests. Accordingly, teachers tend to focus a significant portion of their instructional activities on the knowledge and skills assessed by such tests. A high-stakes test of educational achievement, then, serves as a powerful curricular magnet. Those who deny the instructional influence of high-stakes tests have not spent much time in public school classrooms recently.

6 Although with less fanfare than during the late Seventies, when many states instituted high school graduation tests, high-stakes educational tests continue to be introduced. Every month or so we hear of another high-stakes test being established. Some of the most recently established high-stakes tests are examinations that prospective teachers must pass in order to be certified. Student assessment programs in Texas and California are being expanded to include more

grade levels, and in more and more states – South Carolina and Texas, for example – tests are being used as requirements for high school graduation.

Dimensions of Quality

7 As I said above, MDI can be a potent force for educational improvement if properly conceived and implemented. What are the attributes of good measurement-driven instruction? Although there are surely other elements that might be incorporated into an effective MDI program, meeting the following five criteria will almost certainly guarantee that a program of measurement-driven instruction will have a beneficial effect.

8 **Criterion-referenced tests.** The chief virtue of MDI stems from the clarity with which instructional targets – that is, the skills and knowledge being tested – are described. Even skillful teachers cannot target their instruction if they are unaware of what the assessment targets are. Thus criterion-referenced tests, rather than norm-referenced tests, must be employed in a program of measurement-driven instruction because the descriptive clarity of well-constructed criterion-referenced tests gives teachers comprehensible descriptions of what is being tested. Norm-referenced tests, while useful for other important educational functions, lack the descriptive clarity required for purposes of instructional design. Although teachers have a general idea of what will be tested by norm-referenced examinations, there is too much descriptive ambiguity in such tests to encourage on-target teaching.

9 **Defensible content.** If measurement-driven instruction is to enhance the quality of schooling, its tests must assess genuinely defensible skills and knowledge. Why drive instruction toward trivial destinations? Sadly, a number of the minimum competency tests adopt-

ed in the late 1970s could have been more accurately labeled "most minimum imaginable" competency tests. The content of high-stakes educational tests should be subjected to intense scrutiny by all concerned clients, so that the tests measure truly worthwhile content. Because of the clarity with which the content of a criterion-referenced test can be defined, rigorous judgments can be rendered about whether or not that content is defensible. It is time for U. S. educators to pursue loftier curricular aspirations – aspirations that can be embodied in a high-stakes test.

10 **A manageable number of targets.** Too many instructional targets turn out to be no targets at all. Well-crafted high-stakes tests should not be used to assess a multitude of skills or objectives. Rather, in order for teachers to give meaningful attention to promoting the content to be tested, the number of assessment targets covered by the test should be in the neighborhood of five or ten. We learned an important lesson during the heyday of behavioral objectives. Teachers who are overwhelmed by endless litanies of tiny instructional targets will pay heed to none. A high-stakes test must focus on only a reasonable number of important skills or knowledge targets – targets sufficiently general to include enabling skills and content. A number of high-stakes tests in reading, for instance, assess only five or six truly essential skills, such as finding the "main idea" and drawing the correct "inference".

11 **Instructional illumination.** Although it is not widely recognized by the education community, criterion-referenced tests can be constructed in such a way that they actually encourage teachers to design effective instructional sequences. For example, a skill that requires examinees to make sophisticated discriminations can be assessed via multiple-choice items constructed according to carefully

designed, instructionally relevant rules. Suppose that the correct answer to a multiple-choice test item must explicitly satisfy all of three positive criteria while violating none of four negative criteria. Because teachers who are informed of these criteria will recognize the importance of students' mastering them, it is likely that the seven criteria will be emphasized instructionally. Those who develop high-stakes tests for measurement-driven instruction must conceptualize the skills or knowledge to be tested in such a way that teachers can use the targeted skills and knowledge to design effective instructional sequences. In this way, well-made tests will function as catalysts to improved instruction.

12 **Instructional support.** Appropriately crafted high-stakes tests are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for effective programs of measurement-driven instruction. Ample instructional support must also be provided to educators so that they can make the best use of MDI. During 1986, for example, Texas officials provided the state's educators with guides that outlined instructional strategies for all subjects tested statewide at grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. For each skill to be tested, the guides contain 1) a description of the skill, 2) an illustrative test item, 3) an analysis of how the skill might be taught, and 4) potentially useful instructional activities and exercises. Such materials to support instruction are needed if measurement-driven instruction is to work most effectively.

13 Historically, testing has been something that teachers have thought about only after instruction was over. Tests have been employed to determine how much students have learned, so that teachers could use this information to assign grades. For most teachers, test-making has been an end-of-instruction endeavor.

14 But with the advent of high-stakes testing, such traditional

conceptions of measurement must be abandoned. No longer can we view test development as an afterthought. Instead, educators must reconceive the relationship between measurement and instruction, so that tests are employed as vehicles of instructional clarification. Because high-stakes test will surely function as instructional magnets, the challenge is to fashion those tests so that they become a potent force for educational improvement.

Is MDI Needed?

15 There's really little need to employ an improvement strategy, such as measurement-driven instruction, if all is well in American education. Those who believe that the quality of public schooling in the U. S. today is acceptable also believe that – despite isolated instances of instructional incompetence – teachers are generally doing a decent job, students are spontaneous and creative, and most curricula embody a meaningful number of high-level goals. If I shared this belief, I would have little need to try to enhance the quality of education through the use of measurement-driven instruction or any other tactic.

16 I believe, however, that the quality of schooling in the U. S. is far from acceptable. Although there are pockets of pedagogical brilliance, far too many classrooms can be found in which teaching is intolerably weak – classrooms choked with irrelevant, time-filling activities that leave hordes of students bored, unmotivated, and lacking mastery of even the most basic skills.

17 Whatever the causes of such ineffectiveness, its consequences are visible whenever a high-stakes test is initially installed. Far too many students know far too little. In confirming such a perception, Chester Finn, assistant secretary for research and improvement in the U. S. Department of Education, recently characterized the per-

formance of American students as "scandalously low".

18 Critics of measurement-driven instruction often contrast its possible ill effects with a benign depiction of the success of public schools that simply doesn't square with reality. The merits of MDI must be honestly contrasted with what currently exists in the nation's classrooms. And what currently exists in the public schools needs improvement, not applause.

Responsible Criticism

19 Those who would have U. S. educators reject measurement-driven instruction as a strategy to improve schooling must do more than simply trot out a horror story or two about its negative consequences. Of course, any effective tool can always be misused. A scalpel that can save lives when used by a skilled neurosurgeon can become a murder weapon in the wrong hands. That possibility, however, should not incline us to outlaw scalpels.

20 Critics of measurement-driven instruction must demonstrate, via argument and evidence, that this improvement strategy is so fundamentally flawed that it is either certain or far more likely to have negative rather than positive consequences. Proponents of MDI, on the other hand, must show that it stands a reasonably good chance of succeeding.

21 Let us briefly consider some of the more commonly voiced criticisms leveled at measurement-driven instruction. For the most part, these are specious attacks, lacking both analytic rigor and empirical support.

22 **Curricular reductionism.** It is alleged that measurement-driven instruction will necessarily lead to the pursuit of trivial, indefensible goals. Of course, this is not necessarily so. Why should we believe that public school educators – who, in their typical activities, pursue

high-level goals – would suddenly, when creating a high-stakes test, aim exclusively for low-level goals? Basic skills are being measured in many student assessment programs because students do not possess such skills – not because they are the only skills that could be measured. High-stakes tests need not be directed only toward basic skills. In Pennsylvania and California, for example, new statewide "honors" tests have been established that deal with genuinely higher order drills.

23 **Curricular stagnation.** Critics claim that the use of high-stakes tests will lock educators into an unalterable pursuit of the content being assessed by the tests. But such inflexibility is not necessary. Already a number of states – New Jersey and Connecticut, for example – have meaningfully refurbished their student assessment programs in order to assess more demanding skills.

24 **Constrained teacher creativity.** Critics contend that the pressures of instructional assessment will constrain teachers' spontaneity in the classroom. Yet for every teacher the critics can find whose creativity has been stifled by high-stakes tests, I'll produce many more who, because of those tests, waste far less of their students' time with irrelevancy and busywork. Creative teachers can efficiently promote mastery of content-to-be-tested and then get on with other classroom pursuits.

25 **Lowered student aspirations.** Some critics of measurement-driven instruction argue that the aspirations of students will be diminished because they will pursue only the skills and knowledge being tested. Tell that to a chemistry teacher whose students don't need to know chemistry for a statewide basic skills test. Would such a teacher be likely to implore students to "take it easy" because there's no chemistry content on the statewide test? Of course not.

There's obviously more to school than what's covered on a high-stakes test. Teachers know this; students know this. And if the critics of MDI don't know it, they ought to.

26 **Inappropriate role of tests.** Some critics of measurement-driven instruction have argued that tests should follow, not lead, the curriculum. These critics contend that considering testing before determining curriculum is putting the cart before the horse. It can be empirically demonstrated that a carrot-laden cart will provide a powerful incentive if placed in the path of an underfed pony. As I suggested above, educators need to abandon out-moded notions that testing must follow teaching. Properly conceptualized tests can provide the requisite clarity to make instruction more effective.

Evidence of Success

27 Happily, the case for measurement-driven instruction need not depend on rhetoric. During recent years a number of states and school districts have installed high-stakes educational tests in an effort to enhance the quality of local instruction. Table 1 [next page] presents improvements in the test performance of students in six states and one urban school district.

28 Table 1 shows us that substantial improvements in student mastery of basic skills have been seen during the past half-dozen years. These percentage improvements represent the increased proportions of students who have displayed mastery of established standards – for example, a passing standard of 70% correct on a basic skills test. It is impossible to consider the evidence reported from these seven settings without concluding that, in situations in which measurement-driven instruction has been properly installed, improved student performance on high-stakes tests follows.

29 How would critics of measurement-driven instruction attempt to