

CONTENT AREA READING

AN INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH
MARY M. DUPUIS/EUNICE N. ASKOV

CONTENT AREA READING AN INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH

**MARY M. DUPUIS
EUNICE N. ASKOV**

The Pennsylvania State University

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To
Betsy,
David,
Pam,
and others like them

Preface

This book is designed for teachers of content subjects, preservice or inservice. Any teacher who deals with science, mathematics, social studies, literature, health, home economics, and other subjects will find useful teaching techniques within it. Actual teacher-tested examples of the techniques included in the book cover grades 4–12.

The major goal of the book is to help teachers feel comfortable planning and teaching reading skills necessary to understand their content material. Many content teachers feel helpless and inadequately prepared to deal with reading and their own students. This book will help them feel competent to teach reading in their subject and, therefore, more comfortable doing it.

In order to gain this confidence and competence, teachers must develop knowledge about reading and positive attitudes toward teaching reading in their own classrooms. A unique feature of this book is the assessment of both knowledge of reading and attitude toward teaching reading. These assessments are part of the Preview, to give pretest information, and part of the Conclusion, to give posttest information. The tests are self-scoring, so that readers may assess their own change in knowledge and attitude, independent of course requirements, tests, and grades. The reader's own sense of increased competence and confidence is the most important result of this assessment.

The educational philosophy underlying this book centers on *individualization*. Each student, in any grade and subject, deserves to be treated as an individual. This is especially important in reading, since reading ability varies widely within classes. Realistically, the secondary teacher with large numbers of students will aim for individual attention but will practice it in classes by grouping students differently within classes for different teaching goals. *Grouping* thus becomes the practical application of the principle of individualization.

A second facet of the book's goal is that teachers learn to integrate the teaching of reading into their content instruction. Viewed from this angle, *integration* keeps content goals as primary. Reading goals are derived by analyzing content goals, teaching style, and available resources to derive those reading skills necessary to learn the content material

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Preview

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ABOUT

Premise of This Book

1. Teachers of content subjects can become competent and confident in teaching reading skills as an integral part of their content teaching. The integration of content objectives with those of reading necessitates careful assessment of student ability and long range planning for instruction by the classroom teacher. Teachers' sensitivity to students' individual differences can be developed so that teachers will appreciate the necessity for providing individual and small group experiences for all students. The goal is to improve teachers' attitudes toward the importance of teaching reading, their feeling of confidence in their own ability to do it, and their command of some techniques for doing it, geared to each one's subject area.

2. Diagnostic teaching, using diagnosed student needs as the basis for instruction, is the most effective way to approach reading in content areas—and other kinds of teaching, as well.

The First Step

Throughout the book, we will ask you to assess your students' level of knowledge and skill before you start teaching them. That means we must also assess *your* present level on two of the issues mentioned here: (1) your present level of knowledge of reading skills, and (2) your present attitude toward teaching reading in your content classroom.

Following are two assessment tools which have been used with preservice and inservice teachers. They represent both our affective and cognitive goals for the reader of this book. The assessments will allow you to see what you need to know in order to teach your students effectively and attend to their needs. The attitude assessment will help you see how you presently feel about the problems students have with reading and your responsibility to help them read better in your class. So assess yourself by answering the questions as well as you can right now. Be as honest as you can. We

expect that you are not familiar with many of the concepts described here; we also expect that much of the terminology will be new. However, you may find that you know more than you thought. After you score your own tests, you can compare your scores with others who have taken them.

KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT AREA READING

E. N. Askov, M. M. Dupuis, J. McLaughlin

These multiple choice questions are designed to test your knowledge of basic materials and methods for teaching reading in various content areas.

Answer each question by marking the letter of the best choice in the space to the left of the number. Please answer each item. Mark answer e if you really do not know the answer and prefer not to guess. We are more interested in what you know than in a lucky guess.

- _____ 1. The primary task of the content area teacher with respect to diagnostic teaching of reading is to
 - a) foster the transfer of basic reading skills to content area materials.
 - b) develop positive attitudes toward content subjects.
 - c) provide phonics instruction to those students who need it.
 - d) assess student performance in relation to graph norms.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 2. Study skills are *best* described as those skills concerned with
 - a) understanding the main idea.
 - b) recognizing relationships and sequences of events.
 - c) labeling concepts.
 - d) locating and interpreting information.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 3. A structured overview or advance organizer can be effective in developing vocabulary skills mainly because it requires the student to
 - a) illustrate a concept in order to demonstrate understanding of vocabulary words.
 - b) rely on the conceptual organization of the material to clarify the meanings of new words.
 - c) rewrite the selection in his/her own words, thereby reinforcing knowledge of new words.
 - d) develop his/her own list of "key words" or "key ideas."
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 4. Criterion-referenced evaluation procedures provide information related to
 - a) achievement of general curriculum goals.
 - b) achievement with respect to established community or national norms.
 - c) achievement of specific instructional objectives.

- d) achievement with respect to individual ability levels.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 5. The learning center technique provides a means of adapting material to a student's particular learning style in that the technique
- a) allows for a variety of learning strategies.
 - b) is based primarily on student planning.
 - c) places emphasis on the student's interpersonal relationships.
 - d) focuses only on practical skill development.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 6. Which of the following is *not* a major component of readability?
- a) comparison with the average reading level in the class.
 - b) reader's interest in the subject.
 - c) reader's background information.
 - d) aids to reading found in a textbook.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 7. Which of the following strategies would be more effective than the others for instruction in specific skills, ideas, or concepts?
- a) informal reading inventory.
 - b) SQ3R.
 - c) library reference center.
 - d) learning activity package.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 8. "Readability" is most often measured in terms of
- a) the average number of syllables and sentences in a given passage.
 - b) the general reading ability of the student.
 - c) the potential use of a book for independent reading.
 - d) the number of specific oral reading errors occurring in a given passage.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 9. Which of the following statements corresponds to the psycholinguistic definition of reading?
- a) Reading involves the recognition of words through letter-by-letter processing.
 - b) Cultural backgrounds influence reading comprehension in a negative way.
 - c) A student needs to be able to use language efficiently to read well.
 - d) The reader must recognize each word in a sentence before comprehension can take place.
 - e) I honestly don't know.
- _____ 10. A "change agent" can best be described as an individual who
- a) tends to be more tolerant of ambiguities than more authoritarian individuals.
 - b) provides teachers with skills necessary for dealing effectively with administrators.