This annotated bibliography of materials in the ERIC database contains 30 annotations (dating from 1974 to 1989) on informal reading inventories (IRIs). The citations were selected to help professionals understand the history of, the uses of, and the issues surrounding IRIs. The major sections of the bibliography are: Overview, General Uses, Critiques and Issues, Validity and Reliability Research, and Special Populations. (MS)
Informal reading inventories (IRIs) have been used for nearly half a century to help assess students' reading. Thus, the ERIC database contains numerous citations relating to IRIs. The citations in this FAST Bib were selected specifically to help professionals understand the history of, the uses of, and the issues surrounding IRIs. The major sections of this bibliography are: Overview, General Uses, Critiques and Issues, Validity and Reliability Research, and Special Populations. Abstracts for some of the items cited here have been abbreviated to allow for the inclusion of additional citations.

Two types of citations are included in this bibliography—citations to ERIC documents and citations to journal articles. The distinction between the two is important only if you are interested in obtaining the full text of any of these items. To obtain the full text of ERIC documents, you will need the ED number given in square brackets following the citation. For approximately 98% of the ERIC documents, the full text can be found in the ERIC microfiche collection. This collection is available in over 800 libraries across the country. Alternatively, you may prefer to order your own copy of the document from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). You can contact EDRS by writing to 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, or by telephoning them at (800) 227-3742 or (703) 823-0500. For those few ERIC documents which are not available by these means, information regarding their availability is provided in the square brackets.

Full text copies of journal articles are not available in the ERIC microfiche collection or through EDRS. Articles can be acquired most economically from library collections or through interlibrary loan. Articles from some journals are also available through University Microfilms International at (800) 732-0616 or through the Original Article Tearsheet Service of the Institute for Scientific Information at (800) 523-1850.

Overview

Discusses the evaluation and testing procedures schools use to evaluate and test reading achievement. Identifies three major categories of tests: achievement/survey, diagnostic, and IRIs.


Concludes that standard reading inventories may be made more useful by modifying them to assess the specific abilities and needs of disabled readers. Offers suggestions for making modifications.


Traces the origin and development of the IRI and discusses its future as an assessment tool.
Presents a comprehensive description of the use of IRIs and provides teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction. Argues that the best IRIs evaluate reading through procedures that are as close as possible to natural reading activities and that there should be a close fit between assessment and instructional materials.

Describes various types of reading tests and assessment techniques. Outlines a strategy for selecting instruments. Includes a chapter on IRIs and oral miscue analysis. Concludes with an annotated bibliography of recent publications on the identification and alleviation of reading difficulties.

Discusses the use of IRIs in evaluating reading performance. Notes that although the IRI provides an in-depth evaluation of reading behavior, it should be used in conjunction with other information to assess reading ability.

Concludes that IRIs can be useful, flexible assessment and instruction tools in the hands of knowledgeable teachers. Offers suggestions for their use.

Reports on what started out to be a survey of the use of IRIs by teachers that revealed the technique to be embedded in a complex environment. Concludes that the use of IRIs and other diagnostic methods can be limited when teachers do not have primary responsibility for making placement decisions.

Examines the use of IRIs for student placement in reading groups and the use of computerized diagnosis and its limitations. Encourages careful use to minimize limitations.

Concludes that most elementary school teachers surveyed were familiar with IRIs and knew how to administer them.

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Concludes that most elementary school teachers surveyed were familiar with IRIs and knew how to administer them.
Claims that in the conventional administration of the IRI comprehension diagnosis is inordinately influenced by the reader's ability to recall information. Suggests that allowing reinspection by the reader restores recall to its proper function and may result in other advantages.


Considers whether comprehension questions that claim to assess students' skills in finding main ideas may in fact be measuring their knowledge of identifying the passage topic.

Gillis, M. K.; Olson, Mary W. "Elementary IRIs: Do They Reflect What We Know about Text Type/Structure and Comprehension?" Reading Research and Instruction, v27 n1 p36-44 Fall 1987.

Analyzes four IRIs to determine the text type of each passage, whether narrative passages are well formed, and whether expository passages are well organized. Finds almost half the narratives poorly formed. Concludes that the lack of continuity in text type and organization could result in students' comprehension scores being erratic and invalid.


Discusses weaknesses in both published and teacher-made IRIs. Suggests using the Fry readability formula. Introduces teachers to a new format for published inventories.

Validity and Reliability Research


Examines what oral reading accuracy level is most appropriate for the instructional level and whether repetitions should count as oral reading errors. Includes tables indicating word recognition accuracy at each level of an IRI and percentage of oral reading accuracy with and without repetitions.
ent question types. Reports that the validity of the JAT as a diagnostic instrument is established.

Newcomer, Phyllis L. “A Comparison of Two Published Reading Inventories,” Remedial and Special Education (RASE), v6 n1 p31-36, Jan-Feb 1985.

Studies the extent to which two commercially published IRIs that identify the same instructional level when administered to 50 children in grades one through seven demonstrate a significant lack of congruence between the instruments, particularly at the intermediate grade levels.

Olson, Mary W.; Gillis, M. K. “Text Type and Text Structure: An Analysis of Three Secondary Informal Reading Inventories,” Reading Horizons, v28 n1 p70-80 Fall 1987.

Suggests that IRIs should include both narrative and expository passages. Describes a study of several reading inventories indicating that some current secondary school IRIs have been constructed with some consistency of text types. No clear picture of text structure for the inventories was found.

Special Populations


Describes practical and readily accessible informal assessment strategies for evaluating adult readers. Includes (1) observation, (2) simplified reading inventories, (3) cloze procedures, (4) group reading inventories, (5) criterion-referenced tests, and (6) IRIs.


Offers guidelines for the selection and use of commercially prepared IRIs with deaf students. Modifications for deaf students pertain to: selection of the passage to begin testing, the criteria for oral and silent reading levels, and procedures for estimating students’ reading potential levels.


Compares the results of different types of reading achievement measures for 58 low-income urban black third graders. Finds that correlations among all of the measures were moderate to high. Examination of teachers’ judgments regarding reading book placement, as compared to test results, indicated that teachers underestimated students’ reading ability and placements did not reflect test results.


Discusses students with various cognitive styles and their inability to perform well on standardized tests. Notes that impulsive and reflective style students seem to do better on informal tests. Suggests a combination of standardized and informal testing for making educational decisions.


Compares results of 90 pupils in grades one through three, half English speaking and half Spanish speaking, on IRIs administered in their respective countries. Determines by analysis of variance whether significant differences exist between decoding errors of pupils in both countries.