



Understanding Reading Problems: Assessment and Instruction (8th Edition)

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Understanding Reading Problems: Assessment and Instruction (8th Edition) serves the needs of classroom teachers in teaching and assessing reading and writing skills. The focus of this book is on providing tools, strategies, and well-informed diagnostic judgment skills for teachers to monitor students' literacy development. In this eighth edition, the concepts and the principles that guided the development of the first seven editions have been strengthened and expanded. Many of the chapters in this edition have been re-ordered into a developmental sequence, with chapters on emergent, beginning and fledgling, developing and mature readers and writers in order in the first half of the book. There are also two new chapters: Chapter 2 and Chapter 9.

The book consists of eleven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the roles of reading literacy in the real world and explains the four important 'moments' of literacy assessments which include assessment for screening and placement, diagnostic assessment, monitoring assessment and outcomes-based assessment. Chapter 2, one of the two new chapters that have been added, focuses on 'Response to Intervention (RTI)'. RTI is an alternative process that is designed for teachers to identify and teach students with learning disabilities. RTI guides teachers to respond quickly to the results from the periodic assessment process that teachers employ. Chapters 3 - 7 are ordered in a developmental sequence. Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive look at emergent literacy development readers and writers, consisting of language development, phonological awareness, print awareness and book and print concepts. Chapter 4 focuses on beginning to fledgling readers and writers and continues where chapter 3 left off. Running records, a reading assessment that is used in an oral reading, are also explained in this chapter. Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 deal with developing levels. Chapter 5 provides strategies for teaching word recognition, reading fluency and reading comprehension. Chapter 6 then provides informal assessments that test students' comprehension and attitudes toward reading. Chapter 7 addresses the needs of older readers, grade 4 through high school, in reading, writing and study skills. The chapter includes guidelines for teachers to meet the needs of adolescent students who have reading difficulties. Chapter 8 is devoted to the assessment of spelling and writing development. Chapter 9, another new chapter in the edition, focuses on cultural diversity among students who speak with different dialects, as well as ideas to help teachers who encounter this problem to adapt, accordingly. Chapter 10 deals with the nature and the uses of formal assessments, comprising characteristics of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, benchmarks and rubrics, and federal-and state-mandated standards and assessments. Chapter 11 is the last chapter and covers philosophical, legal and instructional issues related to the assessment and instruction of students with special needs and disabilities. An updated review of research on dyslexia is addressed in this chapter as well.



Each chapter in the book includes a chapter outline, case studies, summaries and references. The outline provides readers an overview of the chapter. The case study provided at the beginning of the chapter is relevant to the topic that the authors present. A review of the main points and a list of references are provided at the end of the chapter so that readers can refer to them for further study. Throughout the book, key terms are highlighted in bold print to help readers locate them easily. The names of the authors in the references section of each chapter are listed in 'Name Index' and all highlighted key terms are listed in 'Subject Index'. They both appear at the end of the book for the readers to review.

The content of the book first encompasses a broad spectrum of classroom problems before addressing specific issues. The authors clearly present the importance of literacy in daily life in the first chapter. Further, they separate the contents into the chapter based on a developmental sequence. I think the arrangement is the major strength of this book. This makes it easier for readers to identify which chapters they should pay closest attention to.

In addition, in Chapter 9, the authors focus on dealing with culturally and linguistically diverse students (Chapter 9). Cultural diversity is one of the factors that most teachers should be concerned with when teaching. As students come from different places and background, teachers should design suitable teaching materials and assessments to serve the needs of each individual student. Additionally, the authors' discussion of cultural differences in the United States can be applied to other contexts.

Another factor contributing to its academic insight is the case study, provided at the beginning of the chapter, which made it easier to understand the main idea of each chapter. Furthermore, the book proves impressive due to its included online resources, activities, exercises and lesson plans. They are available at 'www.myeducationlab.com'. These are helpful for all readers, especially in-service and pre-service teachers. The resources can help both of them prepare teaching materials and assignments.

To conclude, this book provides fruitful information for both in-service and pre-service teachers. The in-service teachers can apply the suggestions and ideas in the book to their own reading and writing classes. Furthermore, pre-service teachers can use this book as a guideline to help them to deal with future challenges they may face.