DIBELS Oral Retell Fluency as a Predictor of Reading Comprehension in Fifth Grade Students with Learning Disabilities.

A Master’s Research Project Presented to
The Faculty of the Patton College of Education
Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Lindsay Gueth, M.Ed.
August, 2012
This Master’s Research Project has been approved
for the Department of Teacher Education

Dianne M. Gut, Associate Professor of, Special Education

John E. Henning, Professor and Chair of the Department of Teacher Education

Checking this box indicates this document has been submitted and successfully cleared a plagiarism check. Supporting documentation has been provided to the Department Chair.
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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine if DIBELS Retell Fluency (RTF) is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for fifth grade students with documented learning disabilities in reading. Participants were selected from a rural middle school in the Appalachian region of the United States who were in the fifth grade and had a documented learning disability. Students were assessed four times using DIBELS ORF-oral reading fluency and RTF-retell fluency (commonly used measures of reading ability and progress). Students were also assessed once using the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory. Individual student scores were analyzed by comparing the comprehension section of each assessment to determine if DIBELS is a valid measurement of reading comprehension for middle school students identified with learning disabilities in reading.
Chapter 1

Introduction

Reading is one of the most important aspects of education. If a child is unable to read it can impact learning in math, science, and social studies. Children with reading difficulties may struggle socially and behaviorally as well (Kaminski & Good, 1996). Since reading affects so many parts of a children’s lives and so much of their future, it must be a central focus in education. Understanding how to comprehend text is the ultimate goal of reading. Teachers need to be able to assess students’ reading comprehension, to help them become better readers. Teachers use reading assessments to measure students’ progress, strengths, and weaknesses. When reading assessments are used as recommended, the results can be used to evaluate individual student development as well as provide grade-level feedback toward validated instructional objectives (Schilling et al., 2007). There are many different types of reading assessments, and it is very important that these assessments are valid. If the assessments are not valid then teachers will not be collecting accurate data from their students. If the teachers do not have accurate data, they will not be able to help improve students’ reading skills and ability accordingly.

They Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) reading assessment is one of the most widely used reading assessments (DIBELS Data System, 2012). Its purpose is to identify students who need other supports in the classroom in order to modify instruction. In addition to identifying areas of difficulty, DIBELS is also used to evaluate students’ performance to make sure they are making adequate progress and meeting goals.

The school where research was completed uses DIBELS to benchmark and monitor reading progress of students in the fifth grade. The school uses these scores and teachers’ advice
for placing students in reading intervention. Additionally, the teachers use students’ DIBELS scores and reading achievement in the classroom to guide instruction. The reading intervention teacher also uses DIBELS progress monitoring scores to make sure students are meeting goals and making progress, which also helps classroom teachers adjust their instruction based on whether students are meeting their goals. The DIBELS goals and cut scores are research-based, criterion-referenced scores and indicate the probability of achieving subsequent early literacy goals. Benchmark goals for each measure and time period were established using a minimum cut point at which the odds were in favor of a student achieving the next benchmark goal (DIBELS Data System, 2012). Clearly, teachers rely on these assessments, so it is critically important that they are valid.

DIBELS assessments are based on fluency. Retell Fluency (RTF) is intended to provide a comprehension check for the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessment. The purpose of the RTF measure is to prevent students from speed reading, identify children whose comprehension is not consistent with their fluency, provide an explicit linkage to the core components in the National Reading Panel report (NRP), and increase the face validity of the ORF (DIBELS Data System, 2012). There is a great deal of controversy regarding the use of DIBELS Retell Fluency scores to measure comprehension. Many teachers and researchers question its validity due to how the assessment is used (Bellinger & DiPerna, 2011). In this assessment, students retell everything they can remember in one minute to measure their reading comprehension and some teachers and researchers feel this is not a valid measure of reading comprehension. The influence that DIBELS has on students’ reading outcomes makes it more important than ever to determine the validity of fluency measurement assessments. The results of this research and discussion will
shed light on whether DIBELS RTF is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for fifth grade students with documented learning disabilities in reading.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to determine if the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) RTF is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for fifth grade students with documented learning disabilities in reading. Findings will benefit teachers and reading specialists and help to determine whether the DIBELS RTF, a commonly used reading fluency assessment, is a useful and valid to assessment of reading comprehension.

**Definition of Terms**

Five Major Areas of Reading - Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

**Phonemic Awareness** – The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds (Yopp, 1992). It is essential to learning to read in an alphabetic writing system, because letters represent sounds or phonemes. Without phonemic awareness, phonics makes little sense.

**Phonics** – The use of the code sound-symbol relationships to recognize words. Phonics instruction is a way of teaching reading that stresses learning how letters correspond to sounds and how to use this knowledge in reading and spelling.

**Fluency** – Reading fluency is defined as the ability to decode and comprehend text at the same time (NICHD, 2000; Samuels, 2006). When reading aloud, fluent readers sound natural. Their reading is accurate, quick, and uses proper expression. Reading fluency is comprised of three component indicators: accuracy of word decoding, automaticity of word recognition, and prosody of oral text reading.
**Vocabulary** – Vocabulary is the meaning of words (National Reading Panel, 2000). Learning to read is fundamentally and profoundly dependent on vocabulary knowledge. Learners must have access to the meanings of words to use to guide them into learning something new or to understand what they are reading.

**Comprehension** – The level of understanding of reading that a student processes. It is active and intentional thinking in which meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and the reader (National Reading Panel, 2000).

**DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills**

(DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS is a fluency reading assessment (DIBELS Data System, 2012).

**ORF – Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)** is a standardized, individually administered test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. ORF is a standardized set of passages and administration procedures designed to (a) identify children who may need additional instructional support, and (b) monitor progress toward instructional goals. The passages are calibrated for the goal level of reading for each grade level. Student performance is measured by having students read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds are scored as errors. Words self-corrected within three seconds are scored as accurate. The number of correct words per minute from the passage is the oral reading fluency score. DIBELS ORF includes both benchmark passages to be used as screening assessments across the school year as well as 20 alternate forms for monitoring progress (DIBELS Data System, 2012).
RTF – Retell Fluency (RTF) is intended to provide a comprehension check for the ORF assessment. Students retell everything they remember about the text they read in one minute. The purpose of the RTF measure is to (a) prevent inadvertently learning or practicing a misrule, (b) identify children whose comprehension is not consistent with their fluency, (c) provide an explicit linkage to the core components in the NRP report, and (d) increase the face validity of the ORF (DIBELS Data System, 2012).

Stieglitz-Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory

Stieglitz is an informal reading inventory given to subjects to assess their reading ability and reading comprehension. Students read graded word list, and then students read a graded passage and retell what they read and answer questions.

Limitations

The first limitation for this study is its sampling size. This study was conducted in a small rural school in Southeastern Ohio where there is very little diversity. All of the students in this study were Caucasian and spoke English as their primary language. Many of these children have similar home lives and background knowledge in reading. Conducting this research only in a middle school limited access to participants because of the small school district since there are only 65 students in fifth grade. Students had to have a documented learning disability, and there were a limited number of students that fit this category in the fifth grade. The number of students does not limit the validity of this study, but it does limit the generalizability of the findings.
Time is another limitation as this study took place over a period of four weeks. Students’ performance could vary more over a longer period of time and show more effect results with more data.

Another limitation is that the researcher was also the participants’ classroom teacher. The researcher knows these students’ strengths, weaknesses, and personalities. The researcher tried not to let prior knowledge of the students affect the results and tried to avoid bias when collecting data. The researcher did not let emotions or previous knowledge affect the findings to the best of her ability.

Another limitation to this study is that the students were reading grade level text passages on DIBELS. The difficulty is that most participants had a difficult time reading at grade level. Since participants had a difficult time reading the passages it was also difficult for them to understand or comprehend the text.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Importance of Literacy

Literacy is a critical skill in today’s society. Literacy education is a vital part of any society’s educational needs and goals. Social growth and economic advances depend on an educated society. Many children continue to struggle in school, and will never master the skills it takes to become a competent reader (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2012). Teaching children to read is a difficult task, and effective reading instruction is very important. Comprehension is the main purpose of reading. Once students become fluent readers they recognize most words automatically and read quickly with expression (National Reading Panel, 2000). Students that are fluent readers can focus on comprehension skills, but students still focused on decoding words struggle to understand what they read. If students can decode the text in front of them, but cannot comprehend its meaning then the reading is not beneficial to the student. Illiteracy is defined as not being able to read and write (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2012).

Reading is a skill necessary for both life and school. Poor reading skills are linked to social problems such as high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, delinquency, unemployment, and homelessness. Poor reading skills have also been linked to behavioral and emotional problems including hyperactivity, poor self-concept, aggression, and a sense of hopelessness (Kaminski & Good, 1996). According to Binder, Snyder, Ardoin, and Morris (2011), “Approximately 130 million Americans (43%) are unable to perform basic reading tasks.” (p. 150). Some people describe literacy as the gateway out of poverty as adults without a diploma earn three times less than those with a bachelor’s degree. Also, eight out of twenty Americans
that have weak literacy skills live in poverty compared to one in twenty Americans with strong literacy skills (Binder et al.).

Research has shown that children’s literacy achievement and motivation to stay in school is influenced by their parents’ educational achievement (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2012). Illiteracy is also linked to poor health because illiterate adults lack information about where to seek help and are unable to read vital information (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2012). Over 70% of America’s prisoners have low literacy skills and cannot perform basic reading and writing tasks such as writing a letter or understanding a bus schedule (Literacy Information and Communication System, 2012). Given all of these statistics, it is clear that reading is a gateway to a successful life, as it expands learning, education, and is crucial for a prosperous life. As a result, reading achievement is an important research topic for educators.

**DIBELS**

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) is one of the most widely used progress-monitoring assessments for identifying key literacy skills (Schilling et al., 2007) and was developed for kindergarten through sixth grade students. DIBELS is a scientifically-based comprehensive assessment system whose purpose is to identify students, who may need additional support, evaluate, and modify instruction in an ongoing formative basis to ensure that all children achieve high-stakes reading goals (Hoffman, Jenkins, & Dunlap, 2009). According to Goffreda, Diperna, and Clyde Pedersen (2009),

DIBELS assesses early literacy proficiency and identifies at-risk students through brief, criterion referenced measures. In contrast to curriculum-based measurement DIBELS consists of standardized items rather than using materials sampled from a district’s
curriculum. It describes the measure as “dynamic” in the sense that prereading skills are assessed on a continual basis using “indicators” that represent the key elements of basic early literacy skills. (p. 540)

The authors of DIBELS claim that results of the assessment represent literacy skills that predict future literacy that includes benchmarks and progress monitoring assessments (DIBELS Data System, 2012). Benchmarks are administered three times a year to all students. Performance is then compared to cutoff scores derived from a normative national sample. Students’ scores are then classified into low risk, some risk, and at-risk. Students classified at-risk are struggling readers who need to receive appropriate reading intervention. Once identified for intervention, students’ progress is monitored. Progress monitoring is an ongoing process that involves collecting and analyzing data overtime to determine student progress.

The DIBELS measures are designed to assess the five major skill areas in early reading identified by the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998). It primarily assesses three of those: Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, and Fluency with Connected Text, while support for the other two, Vocabulary and Comprehension, is still experimental. The DIBELS assessments have five subtests, which include letter naming fluency, initial sounds fluency, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency (DIBELS Data System, 2012). DIBELS does not tell the teacher how to teach, but rather identifies a student’s weaknesses and provides the teacher information as to how well instruction is working through progress monitoring. The DIBELS website provides educators with teaching strategies for each skill area; however, DIBELS is best used as an assessment tool (Hoffman et al., 2009). DIBELS represents a method that is quick, reliable, provides immediate feedback, and teacher friendly,
with the goal of consistently and continuously moving students toward fluent reading (DIBELS Data System, 2012).

**History**

Over the past two decades, researchers have debated the best practices for teaching reading. This debate captured the attention of the U.S. Congress in 1997 when they sought answers to settle the argument. Congress asked fourteen researchers, educators, and parents be appointed to a National Reading Panel (NRP) to find those answers. For over two years, the NRP reviewed research-based knowledge on reading instruction and held open panel meetings in Washington, DC, and regional meetings across the United States. On April 13, 2000, the NRP concluded its work and submitted "The Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read," at a hearing before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Shanahan, 2003). The National Reading Panel identified five critical areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These areas of reading were incorporated into the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the Reading First program as the five components of effective reading instruction. According to Schilling, Carlisle, Scott, and Zeng (2007),

> The enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB, 2002), the most sweeping reform of federal education policy since the Johnson administration waged its War on Poverty, places unprecedented emphasis on systems of assessment and accountability in America’s classrooms. NCLB, including its constituent element, Reading First (Part B, Title 1 of NCLB), has made states, districts, schools, and teachers accountable for the reading performance of students. (p. 429)
A key component of Reading First is the requirement that schools use classroom-based assessments of reading, along with other types of assessment tools, to determine if students are making adequate yearly progress in reading (Shelton et al., 2009). The belief is that classroom measures will help teachers identify students who are not making enough progress in reading providing teachers with a basis for devising suitable plans for instruction. However, for this system to work, classroom measures must be reliable predictors of students’ progress toward the goal of achieving grade-level reading skills. Only then should teachers feel confident in using the results to make decisions. Schilling et al. (2007) found “The DIBELS system has become a commonly used measure of early reading skills in U.S. elementary schools in the last 10 years” (p. 430).

DIBELS was developed by researchers at the University of Oregon and is widely used in schools to support the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Gersten and Edomono (2006) state, “the purpose of RTI is not only to provide early intervention for students who are at risk for school failure but also to develop more valid procedures for identifying students with reading disabilities” (p. 100). RTI helps teachers judge which students need to be referred for special education testing and provides students at-risk with appropriate instructional time to catch up with their peers.

DIBELS includes measures of components of reading identified by researchers as critical for early elementary students and provides benchmarks to help determine whether students are making timely progress toward grade level goals in reading. According to the DIBELS website, for the 2004–2005 school year, 7,113 schools used the DIBELS Data System; these schools were in 2,234 districts in 49 states and Canada, totaling over 1.5 million students in kindergarten through grade 3 (Schilling et al., 2007). The influence DIBELS has on students’ reading
outcomes makes it more important than ever to determine the validity of fluency measurement assessments.

**DIBELS and Reading Comprehension**

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. It is a complex cognitive process that involves integrating information, making inferences, and constructing meaning from text (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Bellinger and DiPerna (2011) state,

The National Reading Panel (NRP) reported that reading comprehension is a critical component of children’s educational as well as lifelong learning. For children to achieve academic growth they must be able to comprehend text and apply this knowledge in their lives. (p. 416)

Research shows that children with poor comprehension skills are at risk for educational obstacles. According to Hogan, Bridges, Justice, and Cain (2011), “Reading comprehension involves two primary processes: (a) decoding printed text and (b) understanding language accessed through the process of decoding” (p. 1). In the early years of reading development, students’ ability to comprehend text is inhibited by individual differences in decoding text. Once decoding becomes automatic, reading comprehension is largely dependent upon one’s skills in language comprehension. Approximately 10% of school age students are fluent, but have poor comprehension skills (Hogan et al., 2011).

Assessing reading comprehension can be a difficult task because it is not easy to directly observe. Developing effective reading comprehension questions for a text can also be difficult because the student’s responses may be related to their background knowledge in the area, as
opposed to their actual comprehension of the particular passage. As stated previously, DIBELS measures are designed to assess the five major skill areas in early reading, and primarily assesses three of those: Phonological Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, and Fluency with Connected Text. Support for the other two, Vocabulary and Comprehension, is still experimental. There is a great deal of controversy over whether DIBELS is an accurate predictor of successful reading comprehension.

DIBELS uses Oral Retell Fluency to assess reading comprehension. The DIBELS website states that for students to be on track with comprehension; they should meet both of the following criteria: 1) meet the oral reading fluency benchmark goal, and 2) have a retell score of at least 25% of their oral reading fluency score. Retell Fluency should be administered to students who are reading at least 40 words per minute. Oral reading fluency (ORF) is a standardized, individually-administered test of accuracy and fluency with connected text. The passages are calibrated for the goal level of reading for each grade level (DIBELS Data System, 2012). ORF is administered by having students read a passage aloud for one minute. Words omitted, substituted, and hesitations of more than three seconds are scored as errors. Words self-corrected within three seconds are scored as accurate. The number of correct words per minute from the passage is the oral reading fluency score. DIBELS ORF includes both benchmark passages to be used as screening assessments across the school year as well as 20 alternate forms for monitoring progress (DIBELS Data System, 2012).

Retell Fluency (RTF) is intended to provide a comprehension check for the ORF assessment. The DIBELS website states that in general, oral reading fluency provides one of the best measures of reading competence, including comprehension, for children in first through
third grades. The purpose of the RTF measure is to identify children whose comprehension is not consistent with their fluency, and to increase the face validity of the ORF.

RTF is administered if the student reads 10 or more words correct in ORF. If students read ten or more words they are asked to tell the person administering the assessment about what they just read. The student has one minute to retell everything he/she remembers. The person administering the assessment counts the number of words the child produces in his or her retell by moving their pen through the numbers as the student is responding. Then the total number of words in the student's response is circled. Student should have a retell score of at least 25% of their oral reading fluency score to meet adequate comprehension goals (DIBELS Data System, 2012).

The approach to assess retell has two potential problems. First, Bellinger and DiPerna (2011) indicate “the entire comprehension score is based on a 1-minute reading followed by a 1-minute retell of words read. Researchers have speculated that the 1-minute reading task may be an insufficient measure of comprehension.” (p. 418). This means that children only have a short period of time to comprehend the text, which means the amount of meaningful information the child could comprehend is limited. Next, Bellinger and DiPerna (2011) report, the scoring procedure of a fluency based story retell has the potential to be a challenging and possibly unreliable practice. Examiners are expected to generate a precise count of the number of words spoken during the retell. A student’s speech may be faster than an examiner can accurately count. (p.418)

Finally, the scoring does not examine how well the retelling relates to the meaning of the passage.

**DIBELS Politics**
Since DIBELS has become a popular assessment for early reading intervention used by many schools in the United States, there has been a great deal of criticism regarding its effectiveness and validity. Federal funds granted to states through Reading First had to be spent only on programs that utilized scientifically-based reading strategies and directly addressed the five big areas of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Shanahan, 2003).

One criticism is that the DIBELS developers claim the research base was the reason for the widespread use of the assessments, but critics say the political pressure to use DIBELS as part of the Reading First initiative was the reason for the widespread adoption. Manzo (2005) states that DIBELS gained a competitive edge because its developers and their colleagues at the University of Oregon were consultants to the U.S. Department of Education for Reading First, with one of the main developers being one of the persons who evaluated 29 early literacy tests including his own product (Shelton, Altwerger, & Jordan, 2009).

Conclusion

Literacy is one key to a successful future. Literacy education is a vital part of society's educational needs and goals, which means that teachers need the best instructional strategies and tools to teach children how to read and monitor their progress. Today DIBELS is a widely used assessment tool being used in classrooms to identify students with reading difficulties, which may need additional support, and evaluate and modify instruction in an ongoing formative basis to ensure that all children achieve high stakes reading goals (Schilling et al., 2007). DIBELS assesses the five big areas of reading identified by the National Reading Panel, which are fluency, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, phonics, and reading comprehension (DIBELS Data System, 2012). All of the DIBELS assessments are fluency-based.
While DIBELS has become a well known assessment and used in many schools across the United States, it does not come without criticism. The influence DIBELS has on students’ reading outcomes makes it more important than ever to determine the validity of fluency measurement assessments. Critics question the accuracy of DIBELS and whether it truly measures comprehension skills. Even DIBELS’ own website states that results related to the vocabulary and comprehension portions are still experimental. Other critics question the politics of DIBELS. Critics believe it became popular because of the Reading First initiative. The research question addressed in this study is as follows:

Is DIBELS oral retell fluency an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for fifth grade for students with learning disabilities?
Chapter 3

Methods

The research question addressed by this research was whether or not DIBELS oral retell fluency (RTF) is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension in fifth grade for students with learning disabilities. The results were determined by comparing students’ scores on Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory with DIBELS RTF scores.

Students were assessed individually using DIBELS. Students read aloud a one-minute oral reading fluency passage at grade level every Wednesday for four weeks. The students were given one minute to orally retell everything they read. The researcher (who was also their teacher) analyzed students’ scores to determine if they met the cut scores for DIBELS. The students were assessed four times once a week using DIBELS.

On Friday of the fourth week, students were assessed individually using the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory (Stieglitz, 2002). Students read a graded word list starting two years below grade level without reading the word in context with 90% accuracy. If the student scored below 90% he/she read the words missed in context to see if he/she was able to read the word. When a student met frustration level with the graded word list, the student read a graded passage aligned with the graded word list they were able to read, at an independent reading level. After reading the passage, the student was asked to retell everything remembered. If students needed help remembering, the assessor could prompt the students with questions.

Scores in the reading comprehension sections on both assessments were compared and reviewed to determine if the DIBELS provides scores were commensurate with the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory scores.
Demographics

This research was conducted at a rural middle school in the Appalachian region of Ohio. The population of the community where the school is located is 1,972 and it has a total area of 1.3 square miles. The county is located in the Unglaciated Allegheny Plateau region of Ohio. Farming and market gardening are a big part of the economy. The largest employer in the county is the local university.

The middle school is part of a local school district that serves three communities. The district has two school buildings. The elementary and middle schools are located in the same building serving PreK to 8th grade students. The high school is located in another one of the three communities, serving 9 - 12th grade students. The district has approximately 880 students with 98.4% of the students identified as Caucasian, and 1.2% multi-racial. Additionally, 63.8% are economically disadvantaged and 23.4% of the students have identified disabilities. On the state department’s website grade card the district was deemed effective for the 2011-2011 school year. The grade card also shows that the district’s performance index has gone up over the past three years from 85.2% to 90.2%. Many grade levels are struggling in grade achievement including, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade. At the high school, most students are passing the required graduation test, but with low scores in science and social studies. Overall, the district has shown noticeable growth and improvement over the years, but still needs to continue to make improvements.

Selection of Participants

Participants were selected from all students in the middle school enrolled in the fifth grade having a documented learning disability. Five students were receiving reading intervention
and special education services and all assessments were conducted in a reading intervention room.

**Instruments**

**DIBELS.**

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade (Good, & Kaminski, 2005). They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. DIBELS is a fluency reading assessment. This assessment was given to 5th grade participants to assess their reading comprehension. Students read a grade level passage for one minute (ORF) and then retell as much as they can about the passage for one minute (RTF). A copy of the DIBELS can be found in appendix A.

**Stieglitz-Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory.**

Stieglitz (Stieglitz, 2002) is an informal reading inventory administered to participants to assess their reading comprehension. Students read a graded word list, followed by a graded passage and retold what they read and answered questions. This assessment is designed to inform the teacher of a student’s reading grade level equivalence. A copy of the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory can be found in appendix B.

**Procedures**

**Informed consent.** The first step taken to gain consent for this research project was to ask the principal of the middle school for approval. The principal wrote a letter giving permission to
collect data on the students for research purposes. Next, approval was granted through the University’s Internal Review Board (IRB) for the use of human subjects. As it was part of the typical instructional procedures already in place at the school, no parental consent was required.

**Procedures.** Participants in this study were assessed individually using the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory. Students read a graded word list starting two years below grade level without reading the word in context with 90% accuracy. If the student read below 90% he/she read the words missed in context to determine if he/she was able to read the word. Once a student met frustrational level with the graded word list, the student read a graded passage aligned with the graded word list they were able to read at an independent reading level. After reading the passage, the student was asked to retell everything remembered. If students needed help remembering, the assessor prompted the students with questions.

**Confidentiality.** The type of formative assessment used and handling of data followed the same school privacy/protection protocol used for all student data and grades. The school district had access to the students’ DIBELS scores on the DIBELS data entry website, as this is the procedures/assessment used for all students in the district.

**Analysis**

**Data Collection.** Students were assessed using DIBELS every Wednesday for four weeks in the spring during their regularly scheduled reading class period. On the Friday of the fourth week, students were assessed using the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory.

The data was analyzed by comparing students’ scores on the comprehension part of the DIBELS RTF with how well the students did on the comprehension portion of the Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory to determine if the DIBELS is a comparable and valid assessment
that can be used for reading comprehension for middle school students with reading-based learning disabilities and not just for reading fluency.
Chapter 4

Results

The question addressed by this research was whether or not DIBELS oral retell fluency is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for fifth grade students with learning disabilities. This research was completed to determine if DIBELS RTF is an effective reading assessment to use to measure reading comprehension. Tables 1 through 5 show the students’ Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), and Retell Fluency (RTF) from DIBELS, and their Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory scores for reading comprehension.

Students’ Stieglitz scores were calculated and provided a measure of each student’s independent reading grade level. For example, BC’s scores on the Stieglitz assessment put the student’s independent reading level between third and fourth grade. Research in the field of reading indicates that in order for students to be on track with comprehension, they should meet the oral reading fluency benchmark goal, and have a retell score of at least 25% of their oral reading fluency score (DIBELS Data System, 2012). In this study, all participants were asked to read a fifth grade reading passage. In the spring, the benchmark goal for fifth graders is to be reading 124 words per minute.

All of the participants met the retell score of at least 25% of their oral reading fluency score for every passage. See Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 for individual scores for each of the five participants.
Table 1

**BC’s DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, Retell Fluency, and Stieglitz Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral Reading Fluency (# of words per minute read)</th>
<th>Retell Fluency (# of words per minute retold)</th>
<th>Stieglitz Reading Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2(^{nd}), 2012</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>3(^{rd}) - 4(^{th}) grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

**MC’s DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, Retell Fluency, and Stieglitz Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral Reading Fluency (# of words per minute read)</th>
<th>Retell Fluency (# of words per minute retold)</th>
<th>Stieglitz Reading Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2(^{nd}), 2012</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(^{nd}) - 3(^{rd}) grade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

**JB’s DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, Retell Fluency, and Stieglitz Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral Reading Fluency (# of words per minute read)</th>
<th>Retell Fluency (# of words per minute retold)</th>
<th>Stieglitz Reading Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18^th, 2012</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25^th, 2012</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2^nd, 2012</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9^th, 2012</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11^th, 2012</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2^nd grade</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 4

**JR’s DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, Retell Fluency, and Stieglitz Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral Reading Fluency (# of words per minute read)</th>
<th>Retell Fluency (# of words per minute retold)</th>
<th>Stieglitz Reading Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18^th, 2012</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25^th, 2012</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2^nd, 2012</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
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</tr>
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<td>May 9^th, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 11^th, 2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1st grade (beginning)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

**DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency, Retell Fluency, and Stieglitz Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Oral Reading Fluency (# of words per minute read)</th>
<th>Retell Fluency (# of words per minute retold)</th>
<th>Stieglitz Reading Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 25(^{th}), 2012</td>
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<td>May 2(^{nd}), 2012</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11(^{th}), 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st grade (beginning)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates that student BC (5\(^{th}\) grade student) is meeting his retell fluency goal of 25% of his oral reading fluency score. BC’s retell fluency scores are very high compared to his oral reading fluency. On April 18\(^{th}\) he received an ORF score of 35 and a RTF score of 21. He is all most retelling just as many words as he orally read.

As seen in Table 2, student MC (5\(^{th}\) grade student) received an ORF score of 28 and a RTF score of 28 on April 18\(^{th}\). This means MC read 28 words per minute and retold 28 words about the passage just read. Then on May 2\(^{nd}\) MC read 24 words per minute and retold six words about the passage, producing very inconsistent results.

Table 3 indicates that student JB (5\(^{th}\) grade student) is meeting his retell fluency goal of 25% of his oral reading fluency score. On May 9\(^{th}\) JB received an ORF score of 39 and a RTF score of 31. This means JB read 39 words per minute and retold 31 words about the passage just read. This is a very high retell score for only reading 39 words per minute.
Tables 4 and 5 indicate that DR and JR (two 5th grade students) were barely reading 20 words per minute, and retelling just as many words. On April 25th DR read 11 words per minute and retold 14 words. This student told three more words than what was read.
Chapter 5

Conclusions, Discussion, and Recommendations

Discussion

The interest that sparked this study was to determine if DIBELS RTF could help students with disabilities meet their goals in reading comprehension. Prior to the start of this study, students’ progress was monitored every other week during reading intervention class. Students’ results were recorded to make sure they were making adequate progress. The students reading intervention teacher questioned whether or not DIBELS RTF was an accurate measure of students’ reading comprehension and decided to conduct research to determine if DIBELS RTF was an accurate and valid measure of reading comprehension that would be useful for students and teachers.

The results of this study indicate that DIBELS RTF is not an accurate predictor of reading comprehension for the participants in this study who were students with identified disabilities. The students’ ORF and RTF scores were very inconsistent over the four weeks of the study. Students earned very low oral fluency scores for fifth grade, but exhibited retelling fluency scores within the normal range. All students scored at least 25% of their oral reading score for the retell fluency score. DIBELS states that for retell fluency, students should score at least 25% of their oral reading fluency score. The results of this study indicate that DIBELS Retell Fluency (RTF) does not give the teacher accurate information regarding comprehension. Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory provides the student’s reading level and ability by grade level and assesses the student’s reading fluency and reading comprehension. The teacher can examine the student’s Stieglitz scores and have an accurate measure of the student’s reading ability.
It is evident that the five students in Table 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 do not meet the benchmark goal for fifth grade for oral reading fluency. BC had the highest ORF score reading 69 words per minute, and all of the other students were below 69 words per minute.

The data presented above indicates that DIBELS Retell Fluency is not a good measure of reading comprehension because the students were reading fifth grade reading level passages on DIBELS, and all of these students are unable to read fifth grade passages independently. It leads one to question that if the students cannot read these passages independently how are they meeting their goal in Retell Fluency comprehension?

These results indicate why there is still lingering questions as to whether DIBELS is an accurate predictor of reading comprehension. Students can talk at length about the passage they just read and the scorer has to count every word the student retells. As Bellinger and DiPerna (2011) state, scoring of fluency based on story retell is challenging because it is unreliable to expect examiners to precisely count the number of words spoken during story retell.

Another flaw of DIBELS is it does not provide an independent reading level for the student. DIBELS just provides information on whether or not the student has met his/her benchmark goal for the current grade level. Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory provides teachers with appropriate independent reading level scores for students and accurately assesses students’ fluency and comprehension.

The Stieglitz scores obtained in this study indicate more inconsistency with the DIBELS RTF assessment. The comprehension assessment for DIBELS does not give the teacher a true measure of how well their students comprehend the text. Stieglitz Informal Reading Inventory allows the teacher to listen to students’ oral reading fluency and check their reading comprehension consistently and accurately.
Students with disabilities need more in-depth reading assessments. DIBELS is quick and easy, but Stieglitz gives a more precise measure of students’ reading ability and comprehension. That being said, DIBELS does have it benefits. It is inexpensive for a school district, it can provide immediate results, and it is not time consuming to administer. All of the DIBELS assessments are based on fluency, which means all the assessments take 60 seconds. Stieglitz can be very time consuming and sometimes has to be done in intervals with students, so they do not become frustrated. Even though Stieglitz takes longer to administer, it provides the teacher with authentic data regarding student’s reading comprehension. Stieglitz is reliable and an accurate measure of student’s reading comprehension. This study’s findings indicate that DIBELS oral retell fluency scores are not an accurate predicator of reading comprehension in the participants who were fifth grade students with identified learning disabilities.

There are many reasons why the DIBELS assessments are used, but one is not because of the accuracy of its comprehension assessment. As discussed in the literature review, DIBELS has become a popular assessment for early reading intervention used by many schools in the United States because of the federal funds granted to states through Reading First. There is political pressure to use DIBELS because its use is funded and the developers of DIBELS were part of the Reading First program. The developers of DIBELS may have been bias when determining the best reading assessments to implement with the Reading First program.

**Recommendations**

Overall, there are many reasons why teachers use DIBELS RTF to assess students’ reading comprehension. However in this study, DIBELS RTF scores have shown to be inconsistent in measuring student comprehension. In this study, it is recommended that the students should have been assessed with DIBELS using grade level passages below the student’s
current grade level if needed. The students in this study were not able to read fifth grade passages independently, as all of the students in this study had disabilities in reading. The fifth grade passages on DIBELS were too difficult for them. To make results of this study more credible, students should read DIBELS grade level passages at their independent reading level. For example if student DR is reading at a first grade level then that student should use passages from first grade to read for the ORF and RTF assessments.

To increase credibility and reliability of these results, future studies should have more than five participants and last for a longer period of time. The study should be completed at more than one school, or a larger school that serves more students with disabilities. The validity of the study would be more consistent with more participants and if the study was conducted for more than four weeks providing more data points and potentially consistent results to compare.

Literacy education is a vital part of students’ lives and teaching children to read is a difficult task. It is very important teachers use effective reading assessments. Comprehension is the main purpose of reading, but can be difficult to assess. This study found that the DIBELS retell fluency assessment was not an accurate measure of comprehension for the five students in this study. It is a quick and easy assessment, but did not provide valid results. There are other reading assessments that are more effective when measuring students’ reading comprehension. Students with disabilities need more than just a one-minute retell to assess their reading comprehension. A one-minute retell does not provide the teacher with enough information about the students’ reading comprehension abilities and caution should be used when utilizing DIBELS retell fluency assessment for students with disabilities.
References


DIBELS data system. Retrieved from https://dibels.uoregon.edu/.


Appendices
Appendix A: DIBELS Reading Oral Fluency Passages
Dogs Helping People

“Raising this puppy was one of the most wonderful experiences I’ve ever had,” says Bryan Shin. He pauses to stroke the head of a black Lab at his feet. Then he continues, “Raising puppies is always fun, of course, but it’s even better when you know the puppy will become a guide dog for a person who is blind.” Bryan and his family are part of the Seeing Eye program, which selects families to take care of puppies that will be trained as guide dogs. The program usually selects families with children aged nine to nineteen.

Because raising a puppy for the program takes a lot of time, the whole family must agree to get involved. The volunteers and their puppies go to training classes, meetings, and on organized trips. The families even go to puppy camp to learn more about taking care of dogs. The families are also urged to include the dogs in family activities like trips to the mall and visits to friends. Being in a lot of different situations helps the puppies become more confident in different environments.

The families return the puppies to the Seeing Eye program when the puppies are about a year old. At this time, the dogs are ready to be trained to help a blind person get around. They learn to guide their owners as they walk on city streets or through crowded stores. The dogs are also trained to be alert for situations where special caution is needed, such as stoplights and curbs. Because guide dogs are trained to be obedient, they are allowed into places where other dogs cannot go, such as restaurants.
When the dog’s training is complete, the family that raised it is invited to a Town Walk. During this “graduation ceremony,” they watch the dog at work. Families often have mixed feelings about these events. “Of course, we always hate to give up the dog, but we also feel proud to know that it will help someone,” Shin explains.
Help Is on the Way

You are standing on a sandy, white beach on the Gulf of Mexico, looking out over the water. You notice a huge bird with long, narrow wings gliding over the ocean. Suddenly, the bird tucks its wings to its side and drops a hundred feet straight down into the water! Before you can blink, it shoots out of the sea with a large fish in its claws and soars upward into the sky. You have just seen an osprey catch its breakfast. Unfortunately, the sight you have just seen has become quite rare.

There are far fewer ospreys today than there once were. One reason for this decline is that people have moved into places that were once osprey nesting areas. As more and more people settled in these areas, they cut down trees to build houses, shops, and buildings. The gradual encroachment of civilization has left ospreys with fewer places to build their nests. In addition, people began to use fertilizers and other chemicals that drained into the water supply. This poisoned the fish that ospreys feed on. Finally, people sometimes frightened the ospreys away from their nests, leaving their eggs to be destroyed by the hot sun.

Fortunately, help is on the way. Many areas where ospreys build their nests are now protected. One of these is the Gulf Islands National Seashore, a park that stretches for more than one hundred miles along the Gulf of Mexico. Osprey nests can be found on almost all of the islands in the park. To protect the birds, people are not allowed in many parts of the park. As a result, the number of ospreys on the islands is slowly increasing. Also, many companies and wildlife clubs have set up man-made nesting platforms in places where ospreys live. These provide
ospreys with safe, sturdy nesting sites out of the reach of people.

Because of the hard work of concerned people, things are looking up for ospreys. Soon, watching an osprey swoop out of the sky to catch its morning meal might not be such a rare sight after all.
Whale Song

I live with my cousin, Jackson, who is a marine biologist. His job is to study the “conversations” that the whales have with each other. Jackson says the sounds these wondrous creatures make are really like singing. If you visit our house, you will hear these songs playing on our stereo more than any other kind of music.

These haunting songs have been described as creaks, groans, moans, chirps, whistles, and squeaks. The songs are not just sounds, but are really melodies with a beginning, middle, and end. A whale will repeat the same song over and over, but slowly the song changes over time and every few years, new songs appear.

Humpback whales are found throughout the world. Males from the same area sing similar melodies. Just like you can sometimes tell where people come from by listening to them talk, Jackson can tell where a whale comes from by listening to recordings of its song. My cousin thinks the songs are a way of sharing information and creating and maintaining a social community. His research examines how baby whales learn the songs of their region.

Male humpback whales can produce songs that last for up to twenty minutes—the longest of all animals. Scuba divers who hold their breath so they won’t make any noise, and swimmers who are at least ten feet below the surface, can hear the whales. To get a really good recording of the songs, you must lower a special microphone into the sea and be pretty close.
People have been recording these amazing whale songs for over thirty years. Next time you are in a music store, ask to listen to a recording of a humpback whale and you won’t believe your ears! At first I thought the songs were pretty strange. The more I listened, the more I liked them. Now I almost think I understand how the whale was feeling.
Mount Everest

Mount Everest, a mountain peak located in Asia, is the highest mountain in the world. It is named after George Everest, the scientist who first mapped the area. Climbers have made many attempts to reach the mountain’s peak. One of the first of these expeditions occurred about eighty years ago. However, it was not until thirty years later that two men finally conquered Mount Everest. By the end of the century, more than six hundred climbers had climbed to the top. The climb is very dangerous, though. More than one hundred people have died while attempting the climb.

Climbing to the top of Mount Everest is a dream of many explorers. One of them was once asked why the mountain holds such an attraction for so many people. He replied simply, “Because it is there.” Other climbers have other reasons for making the climb, but most would probably agree that the climb presents a tremendous challenge. To climb to the peak, climbers must battle ice, snow, and howling wind. They must cross hazardous gaps as big as canyons in the ice. Climbers sometimes lose fingers and toes to frostbite.

The lack of oxygen is one of the biggest problems that climbers face. A lack of oxygen to the brain can cause climbers to lose interest in eating and drinking and to become confused. It can also affect their sleep. Because of the harsh conditions during the climb, people who make it to the top do not stay there long. They immediately turn around and head back down the mountain.
People who climb Mount Everest today use more advanced climbing equipment than early climbers. While the first climbers wore clothing made of cotton and wool, today’s climbers wear high-tech fabrics designed to hold in warmth. They use oxygen tanks to breathe and satellite phones and computers to communicate with the world below. However, even though climbing today is made somewhat easier by these advances, the challenge of climbing Mount Everest is still without equal.
Appendix B: Stieglitz Reading Inventory Graded Word Lists and Passages
Graded Words in Context Test: Form B

Preprimer
1. no ________ There are no blue cats.
2. the ________ Where is the big bear?
3. he ________ Can he read this book?
4. will ________ I will help you read this book.
5. have ________ I have a blue car.
6. and ________ Come and play a game.
7. with ________ Can you play with me?
8. man ________ This man will help you.
9. from ________ Who will jump down from there?
10. that ________ Is that a good game?
   _____

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Primer
1. all
2. has
3. work
4. put
5. new
6. call
7. tree
8. them
9. green
10. window

Can all of you read a book?
She has a pet dog.
I ride to work in a car.
We want you to put the dog in the car.
I want to ride in your new car.
I want you to call the man with the dog.
Stop at the big tree!
Can you help them play that game?
Go with green and stop with red.
Will the dog jump out of the window?
Graded Words in Context Test: Form B

Grade 1
1. wet _______ The fish is wet.
2. hop _______ I can hop up and down.
3. miss _______ I miss my mother.
4. coat _______ Where is your green coat?
5. horse _______ This book is about a horse.
6. shoe _______ This shoe is too big.
7. which _______ Do you know which car is green?
8. black _______ Put the ball in the black box.
9. food _______ I like to eat good food.
10. leg _______ He cut his leg.
11. better _______ This game is better.
12. kind _______ She is a kind woman.
13. table _______ Put the plant on the table.
14. money _______ I found her money.
15. dark _______ It is dark at night.
16. guess _______ Can you guess how old I am?
17. never _______ I never found my frog.
18. bark _______ The big dog likes to bark.
19. should _______ You should like each other.
20. birthday _______ Happy birthday to you!

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Grade 2

1. set  
   Please help me set the table.

2. pull  
   We will pull the horse with a rope.

3. forest  
   There are many trees in a forest.

4. job  
   Did you find a good job?

5. meet  
   She will meet you at the zoo.

6. crow  
   How far can a crow fly?

7. eight  
   There are eight frogs in the lake.

8. you'll  
   You'll find the book on this table.

9. mail  
   There are many letters in the mail today.

10. hang  
    Please help me hang this picture.

11. send  
    I will send you a picture of your friend.

12. wheel  
    The tire is on the wheel.

13. cowboy  
    A cowboy rides on a horse.

14. scare  
    It is not nice to scare a friend.

15. number  
    We have a number of girls in our class.

16. trap  
    We used food to trap the mouse.

17. kitchen  
    A kitchen is a room where food is cooked.

18. question  
    Can you ask a good question?

19. pass  
    You must have a pass when you leave the room.

20. unhappy  
    He feels unhappy on a rainy day.
Graded Words in Context Test: Form B

Grade 3

1. chop
   Please help me chop some wood for the fire.

2. expect
   I expect to be there at noon.

3. knife
   Cut your meat with this knife.

4. visitor
   I heard the visitor ring the doorbell.

5. lettuce
   She likes to have lettuce on her sandwich.

6. insist
   I insist that you wash your hands before eating.

7. fry
   He will fry the chicken in oil.

8. serious
   Are you joking or are you serious?

9. husband
   They make a nice husband and wife.

10. sugar
    Cake is made with sugar.

11. complain
    You should complain about that broken window.

12. refrigerator
    The food is in the refrigerator.

13. alarm
    Did you hear the alarm ring?

14. tongue
    A frog can have a long tongue.

15. kettle
    Please place the kettle on the stove.

16. princess
    The prince and princess rode away on a horse.

17. difference
    What is the difference between a bee and a bird?

18. obey
    You should always obey your mother.

19. useful
    A blanket is useful on a cold night.

20. immediate
    Please send her an immediate answer.

%
**Grade 4**

1. cane
2. wisdom
3. duty
4. publish
5. argue
6. cautious
7. mosquito
8. habit
9. bitter
10. original
11. uniform
12. jealous
13. valuable
14. honest
15. nation
16. patience
17. flake
18. raincoat
19. entertain
20. suggestion

---

The old man needed to walk with a cane.
It takes much wisdom to be the leader of a country.
It is your duty to take the garbage out this week.
I will publish your story in the school newspaper.
Don't argue with him about who won the game.
It pays to be cautious when driving a car on an icy road.
I don't like the buzzing sound of a mosquito in my ear.
Smoking is a bad habit.
Coffee can have a bitter taste.
We know that this painting is an original and not a fake.
The nurse wore a white uniform.
Ted becomes jealous when his mother plays with his younger sister.
This old coin was very valuable.
An honest person does not steal money from others.
Our country is a great nation.
It takes much patience to learn how to ride a bicycle.
Jane saw a beautiful flake of snow on her window.
Dan took his raincoat with him because it was a cloudy day.
Children can entertain themselves by playing with blocks.
I followed her suggestion and bought a car with four doors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.   shack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.   baggage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.   error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.   cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.   legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.   weird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.   series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.   'fumble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.   accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.  machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.  operation</td>
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<td>17.  landmark</td>
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<td>18.  organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.  investigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.  conclusion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- He lived in a small shack in the woods.
- The workers unloaded the baggage from the airplane.
- She lost ten points on the test because of an error in addition.
- She stacked the cans of carrots in the kitchen cabinet.
- The legal age to drive in some states is sixteen.
- He looked weird in that monster costume.
- The hunter followed the series of animal tracks in the mud.
- Our team will lose if you fumble the football.
- I like it when the weather forecast is accurate.
- This factory has lots of machinery.
- He entered the hospital for an operation on his leg.
- The teacher was asked to dismiss her class early today.
- The team never lost hope of eventual victory.
- Stay away from poisonous snakes!
- The sound of a dripping faucet can be a nuisance.
- The fake coin he bought was found to be worthless.
- This statue is an important landmark to the people of our town.
- She planned to organize her students into three groups.
- He was told to investigate the scene of the crime.
- The conclusion of this mystery is exciting.
A Day by the Lake (1)

INTRODUCTION: Please read this story to find out what a girl likes to do.

A Day by the Lake

Pat stood by the lake. A soft wind blew.
Across the grass, ducks swam near the shore. There were big ducks and baby ducks.

Two stood on the grass near Pat. Pat opened a paper bag. She put her hand in it. It came out full of bits of bread. She dropped some bread around her on the ground. She threw some on the water. The ducks swam to it.

They quacked and ate the bread. Pat laughed and threw some more bread.

Accountable Miscues

Full Miscues: \( \times \frac{1}{2} = \)
Half Miscues: \( \times \frac{1}{2} = \)
TOTAL

COMPREHENSION CHECK

L 1. Who was standing by the lake?
   (Pat)

L 2. What did Pat see?
   (ducks)
   (big ducks)
   (baby ducks)

L 3. What did Pat take out of the paper bag?
   (bread)
   (bits of bread)

L 4. Where did Pat throw some of the bread?
   (on the water)

L 5. Was Pat having a good time? How do you know?
   (Yes. She laughed.)
   (She kept on feeding the ducks.)

C 6. Could this story have happened? What makes you think so?
   (Accept any logical response, such as "because the events sounded real.")

Total Comprehension Errors

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The Lesson (2)

INTRODUCTION: Please read this story about a father who tries to teach his children a lesson.

The Lesson

There were once some children who were always fighting. Their father tried to get them to stop. They would not listen. They could not get along together. Finally, the father asked his children to do something to teach them a lesson. The father asked, “Bring me a bunch of sticks.”

The children did as they were told. One child held out the bunch of sticks. The father said, “Try to break the bunch of sticks.” The child tried. He could not break the bunch of sticks. Each child took a turn. No one could break the bunch of sticks. The father then handed one stick to each child. “Now try to break your stick,” said the man.

Each child easily broke a stick in two. The father then said, “Take a lesson from the sticks, my children. Only together are they not able to be broken.”

Accountable Miscues

Full Miscues: \[ \times \frac{1}{2} = \]
Half Miscues: \[ \times \frac{1}{2} = \]
TOTAL __________

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. What were the children in the story always doing? (fighting)

2. What did the father ask his children to bring to him? (a bunch of sticks)

3. What did the father ask each child to do with the bunch of sticks? (to break each bunch)

4. What could each child easily break into two pieces? (one stick)

5. Why did the father want to teach his children a lesson? (He didn’t want them to fight anymore.)

C 6. What can we learn from this story? (Accept any logical response, such as “People are stronger if they are united.”)

Total Comprehension Errors (L & I)
The Blind Woman

A woman who had become blind called a doctor. She promised that if he could cure her, she would reward him well. If he failed, he would get nothing. The doctor agreed.

He went often to the woman's apartment. He would pretend to treat her eyes. But he would also steal furniture and other objects. Little by little, he took all her belongings. Finally, he used his skill to cure her and asked for his money.

Every time he asked for his payment, the woman made up a reason for not paying him. Eventually he took her to court. The woman said to the judge, "I did promise to pay the doctor if he gave me back my sight. However, how can I be cured? If I truly could see, wouldn't I see furniture and other belongings in my house?"

Accountable Miscues:

L 1. Who did the woman ask for help?
   (a doctor)

L 2. What promise did the woman make to the doctor?
   (to pay him well only if he cured her)

L 3. What did the doctor do while in the woman's apartment?
   (took furniture)
   (took all her belongings)

L 4. Why did the doctor take the woman to court?
   (because he wanted his payment)

L 5. Why didn't the woman want to pay the doctor for curing her blindness?
   (She felt he didn't deserve to be paid because he was a thief.)

C 6. What would you do if you were the judge in this case?
   (Accept any logical response, such as "I would place the doctor in jail for being dishonest.")

Total Comprehension Errors (l. & l)
The Promise (4)

The Promise

Long ago, in a distant land beside the sea, people often spotted mermaids. The mermaids had fantastic treasures. Sometimes the mermaids would swim to shore. They would spread their treasures around them on the sand. If anyone came near, however, they would jump back in the sea.

One day, two little girls walking on a beach spied a mermaid. To their surprise, she did not swim away when she saw them. Instead, she smiled and called them over. She gave each a bundle of treasure. "Do not open them until you get home," she warned. The girls promised not to. Then off they went, happy and excited.

One girl soon grew impatient. When she was out of sight of the mermaid, she decided to open her gift. To her disappointment, she found only ashes and dust.

The other girl kept her promise. She did not look inside until she got home. In her bundle she found gold, silver, and sparkling jewels. Her family was delighted, and they never forgot their good fortune.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

L. 1. Where does this story take place? (by the sea) (on a beach)

L. 2. Who did the little girls see? (a mermaid)

L. 3. What did the mermaid give to each girl? (a bundle of treasure)

L. 4. What was the promise both girls made to the mermaid? (not to open their bundles of treasure until they get home)

L. 5. How did the girl who opened the first bundle of treasure feel? (sad) (upset) (disappointed)

C. 6. What is the lesson we can learn from this story? (Accept any logical response, such as "if you keep your promise, many good things will come your way" or "Listen to people and heed their warnings.")

Total Comprehension Errors (L & C)
A Surprise for Miss Stern

INTRODUCTION: Please read this story about a boy and his teacher.

A Surprise for Miss Stern

Ricky Glen loved the outdoors. He always carried with him as much of his favorite environment as he could.

Last Tuesday, a shining early spring day, he carried a bit too much of it into Miss Stern's classroom. As usual, Miss Stern had Ricky leave his nature collection on her desk during class. That day it included a stick with a light brown papery ball attached to it. It was that strange ball that caused the trouble.

All was fine until one o'clock, when Miss Stern said, "Now take out your math books." Perhaps it was the warm sun shining onto the desk that started the whole thing. Whatever it was, that ball began to wiggle and shake. Twenty amazed pairs of eyes stared as hundreds of tiny green specks jumped from it. They hopped around on Miss Stern's desk. They even hopped on Miss Stern. Bolted for the door, she yelled, "Ricky! What is the meaning of this!"

"They're baby grasshoppers, Miss Stern!"
The words, "Get rid of those tiny insects, Ricky!" faded down the hallway with Miss Stern.

Ricky scooped the babies from Miss Stern's desk, the flower pots, the floor, and the window sills. He gathered them all up in a box and carried them outside—all, that is, except the ones that rode out in Miss Stern's hair.

Accountable Miscues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Miscues:</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Half Miscues:</td>
<td>1/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMPREHENSION CHECK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. What did Ricky Glen love to do? (play outdoors) (collect things from nature) (learn from nature)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. What did Ricky leave on Miss Stern's desk? (his nature collection) (a stick with a light brown papery ball attached to it) (a strange ball)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What happened to the brown ball on Miss Stern's desk? (It started to wiggle, shake.) (Hundreds of tiny green specks jumped from it) (It got warm and the eggs hatched out of it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What were the tiny green specks that jumped from the brown ball? (grasshoppers) (tiny insects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Why is the title of this story &quot;A Surprise for Miss Stern&quot;? (Miss Stern didn't expect to see grasshoppers hatching on her desk) (Miss Stern didn't expect to have grasshoppers in her hair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What do you think happened the next day in Miss Stern's class? (Accept any logical response, such as &quot;Ricky might be punished and told not to bring his nature collection to class again.&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Comprehension Errors (L & 1)

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