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Silent Reading before Oral Reading on the IRI: Implication for Diagnosis and Instruction

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SILENT READING BEFORE ORAL READING ON THE IRI: IMPLICATIONS FOR DIAGNOSIS AND INSTRUCTION

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by

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SILENT READING BEFORE ORAL READING ON THE IRI:

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The purpose of this study was to test the effect of silent pre-reading on the number of oral reading errors a student makes on an IRI. Twenty children read passages silently and then orally read passages without pre-reading. The results supported the null hypothesis that there would be no statistically significant difference on oral reading performances for disabled second and fourth graders. Implications for diagnosis and instruction are discussed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		Page
1.	Silent Reading Before Oral Reading on the IRI	1
	Statement of Problem	3
	Statement of Purpose	3
	Statement of Null Hypothesis	4
	Limitations	4
	Definition of Terms	4
2.	Review of the Literature	6
3.	Procedure	18
	The Population	18
	The Materials	19
	The Procedures	19
4.	Results	21
5.	Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations	26
	Summary	26
	Conclusions	27
	Recommendations	28
REFERENCES		30
APPENDIX		32

CHAPTER 1

Silent Reading Before Oral Reading on the IRI

The relationship between silent and oral reading is unclear. Thus, there are conflicting views on the role of each in reading instruction, diagnosis, and remediation. The oral reading process is more easily observed and measured. Consequently, teachers frequently view the reading process as reading orally and plan instruction and focus accordingly.

The ability to analyze a student's oral reading is used to determine the instructional level for his/her reading program and to identify strengths and weaknesses in word recognition skills. An informal reading inventory (IRI), a series of graded passages and corresponding comprehension questions, is used extensively by some classroom teachers, remedial reading teachers, and reading specialists to determine reading level placement based on a combination of the oral reading and comprehension scores. The IRI allows the teacher to tally oral reading errors quantitatively to get a percentage score. Originally, students were permitted to read selections silently before reading orally (Betts, 1954, as cited in Beldin, 1970). Today this practice varies with the examiner and the specifics suggested in particular IRIs.

Some researchers suggest the existence of differences in eye movements, reading speed, and different reading error profiles between oral and silent reading (Juel, 1980). According to Juel (1980), silent and oral reading stem from the same cognitive area and the development is similar. Reading aloud requires all the sensory and perceptual skills required in silent reading, but goes beyond silent reading by involving different neural pathways in the brain (Dechant, 1964). Silent reading is limited only by the ability to grasp meaning, while oral reading is limited by pronunciation rate. It is slower because there are more fixations, more regressions, and longer pauses than in silent reading (Dechant, 1964).

Studies have shown that reading scores differ more between ability groups than by grade, or oral versus silent reading (McDaniel, 1983; Juel, 1980). Poorer readers make more oral reading errors and are less skilled at self-correction. While there is great similarity between what good readers do in oral and silent reading, poor readers show different reading rates (Juel, 1980). Juel also concludes that these poor readers take more time for oral reading because of decoding problems, but do not increase time for silent reading because of incomplete decoding. Re-reading a selection that has already been read orally allows a student to correct errors, decode more automatically, and increase comprehension (Samuels, 1979, as cited by D'Angelo, 1979).

Even though there is a lot of information about IRIs, little research is found dealing with the silent portion of the IRI. When two sets of passages are used to record oral and silent reading, there is no problem when the scores are similar. When they are dissimilar, which one is a better indicator of reading placement when used with comprehension scores? In some cases, the silent portion of the IRI is dropped, more weight is given to the oral reading score, the scores are averaged, or the highest score is taken. Six of eleven commercial IRIs ignore silent reading or make it optional (McKenna, 1983, as cited in Russell, 1984).

Statement of Problem

This experiment will seek the answer to the question: "Will reading a selection on an IRI silently before orally make a difference in the number of oral reading errors?"

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this experiment is to test the effect of reading silently before reading orally on the number of oral reading errors obtained on an IRI. If there is no difference, oral reading assessments can then be generalized to silent reading. There may be implications for diagnosis and instruction. The teacher may miss critical errors for diagnosis if the number and type of errors is affected by silent reading in the test situation. The teacher may want to know all the errors a student would make when first decoding a reading passage to help determine the impact on comprehension. If there is no difference in the two

methods, then valuable time could be saved by having the student read just once orally. Placement in instructional materials and remediation are influenced by the number and types of errors the student makes during oral reading on an IRI. Results of the study may have implications for the amount of time spent reading silently and the situations in which reading silently should be used for teaching purposes.

Statement of Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in the oral reading performance of disabled second and fourth grade readers on an IRI whether a selection is read silently before oral reading or read orally without silent reading.

Limitations

This experiment involved twenty students in the second and fourth grades who were disabled readers at Marcus Whitman Elementary School in Cowiche, Washington. The Highland School District is a small, rural school district of approximately 800 students. Those students enrolled in the migrant program, special education, or gifted students were not included as subjects for the purposes of this study.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used:

Disabled reader: A student scoring six months or more below grade level on the Science Research Associates (SRA) standardized reading test.

IRI: An informal reading inventory (IRI) is a series of graded passages from which word recognition errors are recorded and comprehension questions asked to determine a student's instructional level and to diagnose specific reading difficulties. The IRI used for this study is the Analytical Reading Inventory by Mary Lynn Woods and Alden J. Moe (1981). The content of the two forms of each selection is consistent, as is the readability.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

The role of oral and silent reading in instruction has been a subject of debate since the 1880's. Consequently, as oral reading gained prominence so did its use as an assessment technique. Oral reading in diagnosis and placement, as on an informal reading inventory (IRI), has been studied to determine proper placement for reading instruction at the optimum level for maximum achievement of reading skills. This study is concerned with the effect of silent reading before oral reading on the IRI in determining errors for diagnosis, remediation, and placement in reading materials.

Reading was practiced almost exclusively as oral reading until the nineteenth century. Allington (1984) credits the rise of silent reading to the nature and availability of materials, expanding literacy, and the changing purposes for reading. The oral versus silent reading debate began about 1880 when consideration for instruction in silent reading was argued for by educational leaders and authors of textbooks. By 1955 a moderate position involving oral and silent reading had been reached. Still, by the 1960's, oral reading was firmly established as a universal practice in schools (Allington, 1984), particularly in the primary grades and with poorer readers. There is little evidence in the

literature that there is instruction in effective oral or silent reading, despite the frequency of oral reading.

Howlett and Weintraub (1979, cited in Allington, 1984) found that 85 percent of primary teachers indicated that children read orally every day. The amount of oral reading decreased in upper grades, but the poorer readers still spent more time reading orally than did good readers (Allington et al., 1984). Why teachers use oral or silent reading is based more on convention than on analysis of instructional goals (Taylor & Connor, 1982).

Oral reading serves a developmental purpose in initial instruction, as the children need the feedback of hearing themselves read. According to Mendak (1986), in beginning reading there is a definite need to establish and maintain that link of oral language and oral reading in the early reading stage. Taylor (1982) stated that there is a need to go through an internalization process through oral reading in these early stages. In instruction, the value of oral reading to reinforce learning and improve comprehension is cited by Taylor. After third grade, silent reading skills become more important to meet the reading demands and purposes of the more mature reader. Once the reader becomes proficient, it is important to make the purposes for oral and silent reading apparent to the student and to give appropriate instruction in effective ways of using both. Young readers who rely on the oral product beyond initial reading instruction are actually at a disadvantage (Goodman,

1976, as cited by Taylor & Connor, 1982). The time it takes to decode can decrease comprehension because it interferes with memory storage of the material being read (Taylor & Connor, 1982). A reader needs to understand the general meaning of a passage before successfully decoding many words. Even if oral reading is used for instruction "meaning must be derived before assignment of intonation; students should always be allowed to read silently or at least practice before reading orally" (Taylor & Connor, 1982, p. 433).

Little is known about the actual process of silent reading since it is not possible to tell what is happening, but it is known that fluent oral readers have higher comprehension scores when reading silently (Aulls, 1979). There is more time for comprehension in silent reading. The actual process gives the reader the opportunity to go back and recheck information and use meaning to correct errors, which is especially important when reading difficult material. There is a close relationship between the development of oral and silent reading abilities, indicating a need for balance in instruction and evaluation as the student is learning to be proficient in each (McDaniel, 1983). McDaniel stated that the two processes are similar; that the processes differ more between ability groups than between grades or between silent and oral reading. Good readers showed great similarity in performance of oral and silent reading, but poor readers showed a significant difference in oral and silent reading times and ability to decode (Juel,

1980). Juel concluded that poor readers were not completely decoding during reading, because the oral reading time was increased for difficult material but the silent reading time did not increase.

Teachers have treated oral and silent reading as being the same process for diagnosis and instruction. If they are the same, then oral reading assessments can be generalized to silent reading. Valuable time spent in diagnosis could be saved by using either an oral or a silent IRI. Dechant (1964) stated that oral reading goes beyond silent reading and involves different pathways to the brain. Oral reading is limited by pronunciation rate and is slower than silent reading because there are more fixations, regressions, and longer pauses. Goodman (1976, cited by Taylor & Connor, 1982) maintained that oral and silent reading are totally different processes. According to Goodman, as silent reading becomes the more efficient method, the reader is not constrained by the necessity to encode what is read into speech. Some researchers suggest different eye movements, reading speed, and differing profiles for comprehension errors (Juel, 1980). Juel further stated that both are from the same cognitive area of the brain and that there is similar skill development in oral and silent reading. Allington (1984) in his article reviewing reading research, found little evidence of a strong relationship between the two processes. More research needs to be done, particularly

in the area of silent reading. A better understanding of the differences and similarities of reading demands of both processes is needed.

Reading instruction authors, researchers, and teachers agree that the major purpose of reading is to gain meaning. In analyzing a student's reading in order to determine the most appropriate instructional level, it is necessary to assess and identify word recognition skills in oral reading, as well as comprehension skills. For many years, reading ability was simply judged by how well one read orally. One of the most popular ways to analyze oral reading has been to record student errors through the use of an informal reading inventory. Betts (1946, as cited by Pilulski, 1974) used samples from instructional materials for evaluation using an informal approach called the "subjective reading inventory." Betts developed a set of criteria for evaluating oral reading performances for placement in reading instruction. The levels were described as Independent (99 percent word recognition accuracy and 90 percent comprehension), Instructional (95 percent word recognition accuracy and 75 percent comprehension), and Frustration (below 95 percent word recognition accuracy and 50 percent comprehension).

Several researchers have attempted to validate these concepts of instructional levels. Allington (1984) considered Betts' criteria "widely accepted at the time and remain so today, even though a variety of challenges have been raised concerning their validity" (p. 836). The

primary strength of the IRI is the close correspondence between test material and teaching materials. The questions about the validity and reliability of the IRI concern the sources of error--examinee fluctuation, examiner subjectivity, inconsistency in scoring and interpretaion, and performance levels that have no basis in research, but are convenient and popular (Ahrendt, 1983). As many as 50 to 70 percent of students taking IRIs are placed in materials that are too dificult (Pilulski, 1974).

There is disagreement over the use of quantitative rather than qualitative criteria for evaluating oral reading errors, but there is more agreement than disagreement over what is counted as an error (Pilulski, 1974). Goodman's Miscue Analysis (Allington, 1984) stresses the importance of errors to meaning and weighs them accordingly. Goodman found that readers were able to read words in context that they were unable to recognize in isolation (Goodman, 1965, cited in Allington, 1984). According to Allington, one fault of the miscue analysis is that it assumes fully developed language skills in all students, in which poor readers often show delays. On the other hand, a student may understand a passage even though there are many decoding errors.

Whether level placement from an IRI facilitates learning is another question. Allington (1984) stated that:

> Regardless of how one defines satisfactory oral reading, there currently exists no fully adequate criteria for determining whether placement in any given text is more likely

> to facilitate the acquisition of reading abilities than placement in some others. (p. 838)

Schell (1982) suggested interpreting scores in a band of probability, not as a point of achievement by the reader. Powell (1971, cited by Pilulski, 1974) has recommended using different criteria for different grade levels; for example, for grades one and two, 85 percent word recognition and 98 percent comprehension for the instructional level, 91 percent word recognition and 98 percent comprehension for the instructional level for grades three to five, and 95 percent word recognition and 98 percent comprehension for sixth grade. For the most reliable results from an IRI, Pilulski (1974) suggested using an IRI based on the instructional materials being used to provide a close match between testing and teaching.

When administering an IRI, there is the question of whether to have students pre-read oral selections silently. When Betts (1946, cited by Allington, 1984) first developed word recognition and comprehension standards, students pre-read passages silently. Ahrendt (1983) criticized this practice because he thought artificially high scores resulted when the children read silently before oral reading. Commonly on an IRI, a student reads two selections at each grade level--one orally and one silently. The student is asked comprehension questions after each selection and differences in rate of silent and oral reading are noted. In determining appropriate instructional levels, problems

arise if the two comprehension scores on oral and silent selections are widely dissimilar. If the focus of reading is meaning, and the testing should approximate the classroom reading experience of students, then the question of whether to read the material silently first on an IRI is an important one.

According to Shipman (1984), an alternative to the time consuming IRI is the Group Reading Inventory (GRI). Following silent reading of the passages, the teacher gives the students multiple choice comprehension questions. The advantage of the GRI is that it takes far less time and correlates highly with the IRI (Shipman, 1984).

Brecht (1977, cited by Allington, 1984), in his study, found that 70 percent of subjects reduced errors on oral reading scores at least one grade level when passages were pre-read silently. Gonzales (1975) in his repeated oral readings of IRI selections found a reduction in the number of errors twenty-six third graders made significant enough to make scores previously rated as instructional level raised to the independent level. The total number of errors was reduced, but the pattern of errors was consistent in oral re-reading of the passages. Harris (1970, cited in Gonzales, 1975) stated that in diagnosis, a student should read orally at sight, or many errors that could be used for diagnosis would be missed. If the IRI selection is read orally without pre-reading, there is added uncertainty for the reader, causing stress which would cause him/her to make

errors that would not necessarily reflect the particular decoding abilities of that student (Powell, 1973, cited by Gonzales, 1975). Before successfully decoding many words, the student needs to understand the topic of the passage. An opportunity to pre-read would give the student the opportunity to do a better job of decoding those words (Gonzales, 1975).

According to Aulls (1979), silent reading is a better estimate of how students cope with independent reading. In his study, he found that even fluent readers with few oral errors had difficulty answering inferential questions without re-reading silently. The poor reader had many miscues, but similar comprehension scores on both oral and silent reading selections. As the reader matures, silent reading is the more efficient method for comprehension. Silent reading rates exceed oral rates by second or third grade (Burge, 1983). The student concentrating too much on decoding for oral reading has less attention left for comprehension, causing inadequate comprehension.

Burge (1983) in his study of oral and silent reading for fourth grade students below the 50th percentile on the Science Research Associates test, failed to support Spache's 1981 conclusion that oral reading is not conducive to comprehension. In Burge's study, oral comprehension was better than silent, especially for low achievers. He suggested that reading levels for oral reading may be a function of different factors than silent reading, such as language

experiences, being accountable to the teacher during oral reading, and engaging students both visually and auditorily, which reinforced learning and improved comprehension.

Studies on silent pre-reading on the IRI are limited because of the difficulty of comparing studies with different error categories and definitions, different grade levels tested, and different testing materials. Gonzales (1975) recommended using the first reading for placement in instructional materials. Oral re-reading is being used in instruction to improve speed, decoding, and comprehension, as in the method of repeated readings. D'Angelo (1969) found silent reading to be a useful post-reading instructional technique resulting in better comprehension and more automatic decoding. Recent studies by Russell (1984) and Cantrell (1984) had contradictory results of silent and oral reading. Russell found that instructional levels were different for students who were tested for comprehension after oral or silent reading on the IRI, but on the basis of comprehension scores alone there was no significant difference between the two scores. In a similar study, Cantrell (1984) found contradictory results at fourth and fifth grade in determining placement levels from silent and oral IRIs on the basis of comprehension.

Harris (1970, cited by Gonzales, 1975) cautioned that the present procedure of having the student read an IRI selection orally without pre-reading is critical for assessment. Many mispronunciations and hesitations would be

eliminated if the material was pre-read silently. This would affect scoring of errors and placement in instructional materials. The examiner would not be receiving all information necessary for diagnosis, placement, and/or remediation if silent pre-reading occured.

The issue of whether to pre-read an IRI selection silently is an important one in determining placement and for examining errors. The IRI levels have not been validated as to usefulness in placement, but the value of the IRI lies in the close match between testing materials and instructional materials. Of particular value would be an IRI formulated from the reading materials which are to be used with students.

The role of silent and oral reading in instruction has been debated. The role of silent reading has steadily gained importance, but the role of oral reading in improving both comprehension and decoding is being reconsidered, particularly for low achievers. The importance of both oral and silent reading and instruction at different ability levels within a band of probability needs to be kept in mind for testing, diagnosis, and instruction. The method used for teaching reading orally and silently influences how well students perform on silent and oral tests (Pikulski, 1974). Further study needs to be done on the usefulness and importance of oral and silent reading at different levels of ability. Further study of the effects of instruction on

oral and silent reading and the balance used in classrooms is needed.

As early as 1917, Thorndike (Allington, 1984) concluded that silent reading was better for comprehension. Since then, the comparison of oral and silent reading comprehension scores are conflicting. Some research suggested that low achievers, in particular, comprehended better when reading orally. There has been little research on the number of oral errors on an IRI selection that is pre-read silently before oral reading.

CHAPTER 3

Procedure

The purpose of this study was to compare the effect of silent reading before oral reading on the number of reading errors on an IRI in determining placement in reading materials. The null hypothesis tested was that there would be no significant difference between the number of errors on an IRI selection that is silently pre-read before oral reading versus one that is just read orally.

The Population

Twenty students from the second and fourth grade classes at Marcus Whitman-Cowiche Elementary School in Cowiche, Washington were selected for this study. Parental permission forms were sent home with students who scored six months or more below grade level as determined by the Science Research Associates (1978) achievement test given to all students the previous spring (see Appendix). Seven second graders qualified for the study, as did thirteen fourth graders. Spanish speaking students enrolled in the migrant program and those in special education were excluded from the study, as were gifted students. The school is located in a rural area.

The Materials

The Woods and Moe Analytical Reading Inventory (1981) was the informal reading inventory used for all students in this study. Forms A and C with levels one to four of the reading selections and word lists were used. The word lists were used to help determine the level at which the students began reading the passages.

The Procedures

The data were gathered in two sessions for each student over a period of four months from February 1985 to May 1985. The following procedure was used: Each student was taken from his/her classroom to a quiet classroom during the teacher's planning period. The student read from a graded word list, either form A or C, to determine level placement in the reading passages. When the student missed five or more words, the corresponding level of the reading passage was read, as well as the next higher level.

Some students were randomly selected to read orally at the first session, while the others pre-read silently at this first session. This was done to nullify the effect of test familiarity. The form used at this first session was alternated between forms A and C for the same reason. At the same time, errors were recorded on a copy of the selection while the student read from the IRI booklet. All sessions were tape recorded at the same time.

A few weeks later, the same procedure was followed using the alternate form and method (oral or silent pre-read)

of reading the selection. For purposes of comparison, only the same grade level passages were compared. Level 1 form A and level 1 form C were compared, as were level 2 form A and level 2 form C, etc.

As the students read, the administrator marked the following as errors:

1. additions
2. omissions
3. repetitions
4. reversals
5. substitutions

The errors were recorded according to the procedures in the Analytical Reading Inventory (Woods & Moe, 1981, p. 14). The total number of oral reading errors for each selection was calculated. This number was then used with the total number of words in each passage to determine the percentage of words read correctly. These percentage scores of the same level passages were then compared to determine if there was a significant difference.

The number of oral reading errors made on IRI passages that were read orally were compared with those made after silent pre-reading of a corresponding passage. Second and fourth grade disabled readers in a small school district were tested. The data will be analyzed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if silent reading before oral reading on an IRI would result in the same percentage of oral miscues as would an oral IRI when administered to students. The results of the study are presented in three parts. The first part is the comparison of oral reading scores of the oral and silent pre-read groups. The second part of the results is a comparison of the instructional, independent, and frustration levels obtained by reading orally only or silently then orally. The third part is the comparison of scores of the second and fourth grade groups to see if grade level is a factor.

The oral portion of the IRI required the student to read the passage orally. The silent portion required the student to pre-read the selection silently before reading orally. Each student read at least one level orally and one level silently first. Some students read two levels of each. Those students with only one score read at different levels on form A than on form C because of placement after reading the word lists. Only those scores at the same level were compared.

In determining levels for instruction, ten scores resulted in a change of instructional level (30 percent changed), while twenty-three scores remained at the same level. Four scores resulted in lower instructional levels and six of the scores resulted in higher instructional levels on the silent portion. Only two students scored higher on both passages that were pre-read silently, one second grader and one fourth grader. Twenty-six percent of the fourth graders changed instructional levels and 36 percent of the second graders. All of the fourth graders scoring at the frustration level on the oral IRI improved scores to an instructional level on the silent pre-read selection.

Each student's raw scores for oral and silent pre-read portions of the IRI were converted to a percentage of words read correctly for each passage, since the passages varied a few words in length. The scores for the second grade and the fourth grade were separated and analyzed. There were nineteen fourth grade scores and fourteen second grade scores. The scores for fourth grade in Table 1 totaled for a mean of 93.58 for the oral passages and 94.47 for silent pre-read passages. At the .05 level of significance, the t-test level of significance would be 2.101. A test of two related samples was administered and a t value of -1.01 was obtained. There was no significant difference between oral and silent scores for the fourth grade. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained for the fourth grade.

Table 1

Results of IRI Tests for Oral Miscues
Fourth Grade

Oral IRI Percentage	Silent Pre-read Percentage
94	94
95	95
93	90
92	94
87	94
89	90
99	97
96	94
91	91
97	98
99	95
96	97
91	94
94	95
91	97
97	98
84	95
97	96
96	91

1778 = Total = 1795	93.58 = Mean = 94.47
19 = N = 19	t = -1.01
	.05t = 2.101

The scores for second grade are shown in Table 2. They were totaled for a mean of 91.29 for oral reading and 91.64 for the silent pre-read IRI. At the .05 level of significance, the t-test level of significance would be 2.160. A test of two related samples was administered and a t value of -.30 was obtained for the oral and silent scores. There was no significant difference between oral and silent pre-read scores for the second grade. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained for the second grade.

There were thirty-three scores for twenty children. The scores for both readings were totaled and compared. The mean was 92.61 for all the oral passages and 93.27 for all the silent pre-read passages. At the .05 level of significance, the t-test level of significance required was 2.042. A t-test for two related samples was administered and a t value of -1.17 was obtained. There was no significant difference between the means of the oral and silent test scores, therefore the null hypothesis was retained.

The null hypothesis was retained for both individuals and grade levels. For all those scoring at the frustration level in the fourth grade, instructional levels were raised on the silent pre-read passages. Thirty percent of the scores for all students resulted in a change of instructional level to a higher one.

Table 2

Results of IRI Tests for Oral Miscues
Second Grade

Oral IRI Percentage	Silent Pre-read Percentage
99	97
96	96
95	94
83	86
97	99
85	92
92	95
86	83
95	93
86	81
95	96
90	81
92	97
87	93

1278 = Total = 1283	91.29 = Mean = 91.64
14 = Number = 14	t = -.30
	.05t = 2.160

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Students from the second and fourth grade scoring at least six months below grade level on the SRA achievement test were tested to determine if there would be a significant difference in the number of oral reading errors on an IRI between passages read orally once as opposed to those pre-read silently before oral reading. The null hypothesis tested was that there would be no significant difference in the number of oral reading errors made by second and fourth graders whether a passage was pre-read silently or read orally only once.

Relevant literature contains a great deal of information about IRIs. There was little research comparing oral and silent reading with respect to the number of oral reading errors a student makes. There needs to be more research comparing oral IRI scores and silent pre-read scores.

Twenty students involved in the study were given IRI passages. Each student was given both oral passages and silently pre-read passages. Percent of accuracy scores were totaled. Analysis of the data indicated no significant difference between the two readings at eigher grade level. A t-test for two related samples was determined to be -1.17

with a value for significance of 2.042. For the t-test the t value was at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between oral readings and ones that were pre-read silently was retained.

An analysis of each grade level revealed a t value of -1.01 for the fourth grade with a value of significance of 2.101 and a -.30 for the second grade with a level of significance of 2.160. A t-test for two related samples was used on both with a t value at the .05 level of significance.

For all students scoring at the frustration level in the fourth grade, instructional levels were raised on the silent pre-read passages. Thirty percent of the scores resulted in a change in instructional level; 26 percent for the fourth grade resulted in a change as did 36 percent of the second grade.

The null hypothesis was accepted for the total number of errors made by both second and fourth graders on oral reading of IRI passages and silent pre-read passages.

Conclusions

It was concluded that an oral IRI that is pre-read silently does not yield significantly different results at either the second or fourth grade. Therefore, in the interest of saving time the oral and silent IRIs could be used interchangeably. Special attention should be given those scoring at the frustration level on an oral IRI that

raise to the instructional level on the silent pre-read IRI. It may be that these students should have further testing using both the oral and silent passages in determining placement. Using different scoring criteria, such as self-corrects, hesitations, phrasing, or giving different weight to the types of errors may have produced different results. The results may also be due to the population used, since there were not many second grade scores and because all those tested were low achievers.

Recommendations

Based on this study and a review of the literature, the following recommendations are made:

1. In the interest of saving time, a silent IRI or GRI with comprehension questions could be used as the assessment tool for the regular classroom teacher for the third and fourth grade low achievers.

2. Further diagnosis of those scoring low on the GRI or the silent IRI could be done using oral reading passages.

3. Considering the research and the results of the study, first and second grade low achievers should be given both an oral and silent IRI.

4. Consider all results in a band of probability and include instruction at different levels for every child and include instruction in the effective use of oral and silent reading.

5. Students referred to a remedial program should be given both an oral and silent IRI.

6. More research needs to be conducted on the importance and significance of oral and silent reading scores and the effects of instructional emphasis on each.

7. Additional research with more students within a broader population needs to be done.

8. Keep in mind the importance of comprehension scores, not just oral errors and fluency or oral reading in placement and diagnosis.

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APPENDIX

HIGHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 203
BOX 38
COWICHE, WASHINGTON 98923

Marcus Whitman Cowiche Elementary
March 6, 1985

Dear Parents,

I would like permission to test your child as part of a master's thesis. The purpose of the thesis is to see whether the children read better orally if they have read a selection silently first. I will ask your child to read a selection orally to me which I will tape record. Then I will give your child a second selection which I will have him/her read silently first then orally. From these readings I will determine the number of oral reading errors.

Your cooperation will be appreciated. If you do not want your child to participate, please sign and return to your child's teacher.

Sincerely,

Cathy Benedetti
First Grade Teacher

Dean Mondor,
Principal