What Educational Psychology Means to Me

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Teachers College, Columbia University

American Psychological Association
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What I Studied

- Behaviorism
- Learning
- The Experimental Method

Finding My Focus

- USOE Conference: Educational Psychology
- Project Literacy: Reading
OUTLINE OF THE TALK

Beginning Reading: Phonemic & Decoding Skills

The ABDs of Reading

Reading Comprehension

CATS: Close Analysis of Texts with Structure

Methodology
The ABDs of Reading (Williams, 1979; 1980)
Analysis, Blending and Decoding

Analysis at (a) syllable & (b) phoneme level

Analysis & Blending of phonemes
- F, H, L, N, R, I

Words and nonsense syllables
- VC, CVC, CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC, CVCCVC

Lessons 1-7: Elkonin Squares
8-12: Letters
The ABDs of Reading: Evaluation

Students with learning disabilities (ages 7-12)

40 teachers randomly assigned to program or no-treatment

18 weeks of small group instruction, one group per teacher

Post-test

- Letter-Sound Correspondences
- Phoneme Analysis
- Phoneme Blending
- Decoding Trigrams

Transfer test
## Transfer: Decoding Trigrams

**Experimental vs. Control Students**
**Trained vs. Unseen CVCs**
**Real vs. Nonsense CVCs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Trained CVCs</th>
<th>Transfer CVCs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real</td>
<td>Nonsense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>4.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.86</td>
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Maximum Score: 6
COMPREHENSION

Cognitive Processes
Mental Representations
Strategies
Metacognition
Reader-Response Theory
Identifying the Theme of a Story (Williams, 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ND</th>
<th>LD</th>
<th>YND</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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## Identifying the Theme of a Story: Results

<table>
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<th>YND</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme Statement</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theme Awareness</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
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### No. of Students Offering Idiosyncratic Responses

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<th>Theme Awareness</th>
<th>Idiosyncratic Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
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National Reading Panel Report, 2000
Strategies, background knowledge

Common Core State Standards, 2010
Complex texts, testing, close reading
TEXT STRUCTURE

CATS: Close Analysis of Texts with Structure


Structures: Sequence, Compare-Contrast, Cause-Effect, Description, Problem-Solution

Content: Native Americans, Colonists, Pioneers, Immigrants, Urban Residents
Instructional Components of CATS

Text Analysis
  clue words
  structure-related questions
  graphic organizers

Additional Components
  trade-book reading
  discussion
  vocabulary
  writing
A Sioux Home

There were three steps the Sioux followed to build a tipi. First, they needed to find poles and buffalo skins. Next, they lifted the poles and tied them together at the top. The poles were very tall. Finally, they stretched the buffalo skins over the poles to make walls.
A School in New York City

Children can have problems going to a new school in New York City, and there are many ways to solve them. A problem is that you might live far away from your new school. A solution is that you can take the bus or the subway to get to your new school. The buses and subways in New York City can take you everywhere. Another issue is that you might not have any friends in your new class. Being nice to everyone in the class is an answer. You might be worried that you will not do well on your schoolwork. A solution is to always listen to your teacher about your schoolwork. Going to a new school can be an exciting way to learn new things and make new friends!
Evaluation of CATS

RCT Groups

CATS

No Instruction

Content: no text structure instruction

16 second-grade classrooms, 258 students

50 lessons (45 min, 2 per week)

5 End of Unit Tests, 1 Final Post-test
Measures & Outcomes

COMPREHENSION (Written Summaries)
- Main Idea: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction
- Structure ID: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction
- Important Info.: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction

TRANSFER
- Other Social Studies Topics
  - Sentence Completion: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction
- Natural Text
  - Written Summary: Important Info.: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction
  - Written Summary: Structure ID: CATS > CONTENT = No Instruction

SOCIAL STUDIES CONTENT
- Vocabulary: CATS = CONTENT > No Instruction
- Features (homes, etc.): CATS = CONTENT > No Instruction
Randomized Controlled Trials

Experimental vs. Quasi & Other Correlational Studies

The Independent Variable

Choice of Research Questions

Small Effects

Research Conventions

ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act)

RCTs in the coming years
Research on Reading Instruction in the Coming Years
With thanks to my collaborators

J. G. Atkins    A. Garcia    C. S. Lien    L. S. Pao
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J.S. de Cani    K. D. Lauer  J. G. Ordynans K. B. Stafford
L.A. DeSisto

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Thank you!

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