



Classroom Testing

Part III: Reading




The Reading Process *Barry 1995*

Construction of a text base requires knowledge of:

- text types: ads, menus, letters, newspaper accounts, poetry, short stories etc.,
- text structures: expository texts vs literary texts and the
- linguistic code.

What other knowledge structures might they need?



Construction of a Text Base

Readers employ their knowledge to:

- access the surface code,
- assemble and integrate propositions in short-term memory,
- activate knowledge structures related to probable text meaning, and
- construct a text base that is continuously altered as new information is encoded.


Barry, 1995



Mental Models: Barry 1998

Mental models are multilevel representations of texts that:

- reflect explicit information – text bases
- and
- inferences that vary in number and type



Text Types

1.Literary Texts

Novels, short stories, plays, poems, essays

2.Specialized or Technical Texts

Reports, reviews, textbooks, handbooks, statistical data, diagrams, flow charts

3.Correspondence

Personal or business letters, postcards, notes, or e-mail messages



Text Types

4.Periodical Literature

Articles from newspapers and magazines, editorials, headlines, classified ads, weather reports, television listings, classified ads

5.Informational texts

Guidebooks, phrase book, phonebooks, timetables, maps, signs, price lists

6.Miscellaneous Realia


Tickets, menus, recipes, advertisements, invitations.

Omaggio Hadley, 2001




Creating Reading Tasks

- Keep in mind natural purposes for which someone might read a text.
- Gear tasks to these purposes, but also to overall level of competence of students.
- Use Lee & Van Patten's framework to design instruction for written texts.



Framework for L2 Reading Instruction


- Preparation: Activating Schemata
- Guided Interaction: Vocabulary Building and Exploration of Content
- Assimilation: Organizing information
- Personalization: Applying content to self and the world



Purposes for Reading

In the real world, we read ...

- To learn,
- For pleasure,
- For specific information.



Benefits of Reading

- Improved
 - ▣ *Language Competence*
 - ▣ *Cultural Competence*
 - ▣ *New Knowledge Structures*



Issues in Testing Reading

- Purposes for reading
- Language of assessment
- Item construction



Guidelines for Test Items: Reading

Items must:

- be passage dependent;
- test information from different levels of text;
- provide plausible distractors
- paraphrase information in passage
- avoid look-back-lift-off questions.



Reading Comprehension: Process vs. Products

- **Product-oriented approach:**
 - test items based on same text and classroom activities
 - focus on content
- **Process-oriented approach:**
 - test items based on a novel text
 - focus on application of reading skills