

of all freshmen (c 1400) and then to urge faculty advisors and university administrative personnel to place students in the developmental reading courses. There was a widespread fear of testing, a fear of knowing the low abilities of students and a fear that testing would turn students of Eastern Kentucky to other universities to avoid the assessment program at Morehead State University (MSU). There was the stigma of having to take developmental reading "because you are a poor reader." In this third year (1981-82) of the grant, the identification and criterion problem is still with us. We continue to look for the reliable and valid way to identify the student with developmental lag in reading. When we identify students for developmental reading classes, we are still having great difficulty with students and advisors in persuading students, who need the individualized program in reading, to take the course and stay in the course for at least one semester.

Currently, the Reading Center administers the Reading Progress Scale (RPS) (Carver, 1970) to every freshman entering MSU at registration time. In 1981, a few more than 400 students failed the Reading Progress Scale (RPS). The failure rate was estimated at 29 percent of the freshman class. Every advisor was urged to be firm and rigorously counsel students to take developmental reading if they had ACT composite standard scores of 14 or below and high school GPA's below 3.2, or had failed the Reading Progress Scale, or had earned a 2.3 or lower grade point average in high school. Although 500 or more freshmen (1981) students should have taken developmental reading, only 227 of the 1420 students enrolled in Developmental Reading. Based on freshman entrance characteristics and first semester performance, we shall test a number of hypotheses relating to academic performance and retention between those students failing the RPS who took the Development Reading course and those who did not enroll in the course.

When we examined pretest and posttest scores of students, in developmental reading on the California Achievement Test (CAT), there was no significant difference between pretest and posttest raw scores on vocabulary or on comprehension. This result appears to be consistent with prior research in developmental studies, namely, that the CAT is not able to identify significant differences in the pretest-posttest raw scores of freshman students in developmental reading.

Two weeks before the end of the fall semester (1981), we presented five postcloze tests with 60 elisions in each test for the disciplines of English, mathematics, American history, sociology, and psychology. We obtained the basic college text in each of the beginning courses of the five disciplines and determined readability levels for each text computed by both the Fry and the Dale-Long formulas. With the exception of the mathematics textbook (ninth grade level), all textbooks had readability levels of college textbooks.

The postcloze test procedures were administered to all the students in the developmental reading classes in this manner: (a) From the list of 227 freshman students in Developmental Reading, students' names were randomly placed into one of five categories: English, mathematics, American history, sociology, or psychology. (b) Each student was presented a sealed envelope with his or her name and social security number on the envelope. Clipped to the envelope was a xerox copy of a page from a textbook from which the cloze test in each envelope was taken. (c) Each student was asked to fill in each blank (60 elisions) with the word which was missing or the most appropriate word. (d) When each student finished reading the criterion text in his category, he or she was to raise a hand, and the passage would be picked up by the examiner. The student would open the envelope and complete the postcloze test without time restraints.

The table listed below contains the number of students in each category, the average postcloze score, the highest and lowest postcloze score, and the range of scores in each category.

READING COMPREHENSION OF STUDENTS ON POSTCLOZE PROCEDURES FOR TEXTBOOKS IN FIVE DISCIPLINES

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Funded by Title III (Strengthening Developing Institutions Program), our Instructional System for Individual Differences has four basic subsystems. One of the subsystems relates primarily to developmental studies: (a) assessment in admissions, (b) developmental reading, (c) developmental English, (d) mathematics placement, and (e) oral communication.

The developmental reading component in our model has struggled through many difficulties in its attempt to identify a successful reading program for high risk students. In the first year of the Title III program, there was the concern for acquiring outstanding reading personnel to teach developmental reading and do research on developmental hypotheses. In the second year, much faculty effort, time, and administration focused on identifying the strengths and weaknesses in reading

Table 1

POSTCLOZE TEST MEAN SCORES AND RANGE OF SCORES IN EACH OF FIVE CATEGORIES OF DISCIPLINES

Category	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	High Score	Low Score	Range
English	44	25.1	7.7	40	4	36
History	44	22.8	10.4	48	3	45
Mathematics	44	23.7	8.1	39	10	29
Psychology	44	27.0	5.9	39	9	30
Sociology	44	33.9	9.3	53	13	40
Total	220	26.5		53	3	50

Three classrooms in beginning courses in each of four disciplines were selected. (We were unable to obtain test data in the Sociology classes in the Fall of 1981.) No attempt was made to obtain random samples of classrooms because it was difficult to obtain permission for testing so late in the semester. Students were asked to open their textbooks to the criterion passage and to read it. When students completed the reading, they were to close their textbooks and complete the cloze test for the criterion passage. No student who had taken a postcloze test in Developmental Reading was permitted to be tested again. Table 2 contains the data from responses of students in each of four disciplines.

**Table 2
MEANS AND RANGE SCORES OF RESPONSES BY FRESHMAN STUDENTS ON POSTCLOZE TESTS IN FOUR DISCIPLINES**

Category	N	Mean Score	High Score	Low Score	Range
English	92	31.5	51	16	35
History	90	30.3	49	6	43
Mathematics	105	33.5	54	15	39
Psychology	115	32.3	47	12	35

Postcloze tests are administered after the reading of a passage from which the deletions are drawn; *postcloze tests* are similar to achievements tests. *Pretest cloze* procedures depend upon general background knowledge of the subject and upon his ability to utilize the redundancy inherent in language. They correlate relatively high (in the 70's) with standardized tests of intelligence (Taylor, 1957); Bormuth (1968) reported correlations in the 80s.

The *postcloze test* procedure, which was used in this study, provides a level of functioning specific to reading material in a particular classroom; therefore, it offers opportunities to measure reading abilities adjusted to functional criteria. In many developmental studies programs, there is a greater concern for *remedial* reading than for *developmental* reading. Remedial reading is more focused on improving general abilities in reading and correcting weaknesses in vocabulary and word attack skills. Developmental reading is aimed at improving reading abilities but is more directly concerned about the student's ability to comprehend concepts and meaning of words in specific courses and disciplines. Above all, in developmental reading there is the primary concern to protect the self concept of each student with any kind of deficit or disability. For college students it

means making a student feel challenged to succeed with college materials without feeling that he is in fourth grade, or sixth grade, or eighth grade reading. Students in developmental studies must not feel relegated to an earlier stage of education.

Responses by students in Developmental Reading in this study appear to be much lower than responses of the general student body taking courses in the disciplines. Students in Developmental Reading classes had significantly lower average scores on postcloze tests in four disciplines (English, American history, mathematics, and psychology) than students in general education courses in the disciplines.

When the arbitrary criterion of 50 percent of the total elisions was applied, four of the five groups in Developmental Reading fell below the criterion measure. In the general education courses, however, all of the four groups tested scored at or above the 50 percent criterion.

The relatively large variance of the postcloze scores in the Developmental Reading classes raises the serious question of the ability of a number of freshmen students to read, with comprehension, the basic texts in the courses of five disciplines. After one semester of Developmental Reading, a large number of students are not ready to do college work.

Although the students with extremely low reading scores are permitted to register for developmental studies, it is highly improbable that students with such reading deficits can master the curriculum reading material in a reasonable amount of time. If students with extremely low ACT scores in English and on reading measures are successful in the freshman year, it is due to some personality or cognitive factors which have not been identified in reading research. It is gratifying, but it is unique. The serious question for administration of our Title III program is what criterion measure(s) will we use to predict that students can make up their developmental lag in a semester or two and complete a four-year degree.

We are generating hypotheses, here, not testing them. In the Spring of 1982, we hope to look at pre and postcloze tests, general ability measures, Degree of Power in Reading, attitudinal measures, and personality profiles.