
**REACTION: THE EFFECTS OF THEMATIC
ORGANIZERS ON COMPREHENSION
AND TRANSFER LEARNING**

DAVID J. GUSTAFSON

University of Wisconsin — LaCrosse

Riskos & Alvarez (1984) conducted two (2) studies concerning the use of Thematic Organizers with a) 48 poor college readers and b) 64 sixth grade subjects of all abilities. Their results were positive *contrary* to many former studies dealing with advance organizers.

The major reason for their success, I believe, lies in their well-thought out and developed thematic organizers. This seems to be one of the key elements in this type of research, yet they are usually not included in research reports due to their brevity. In order to advance research in this area, copies of advance organizers need to be included in research reports (I was supplied with them by the authors in a preliminary paper) since their content and format is the base upon which these studies stand. Without them, replication is virtually impossible and probably is one of the major reasons we find such mixed results in advance organizer research.

Finally, these researchers seem to have followed Tierney and Cunningham's (1984) advice: "Clearly, more research in how advance organizers interact with text characteristics, learner characteristics, and type of learning desired is called for" (616). Unfortunately, our present method of presenting research too frequently prohibits the sharing of important details.

REFERENCE

Cunningham, J., & Tierney, R. Research on teaching reading comprehension. In P.D. Pearson (ED.), *Handbook of Reading Research*. New York: Longman Inc., 1984.