

REACTION: CRITICAL READING ABILITY—CAN IT
BE IMPROVED
THROUGH THE USE OF METACOGNITIVE
STRATEGIES?

DAVID J. GUSTAFSON
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

This study was modeled after the Brown and Palincsar training studies (1984) in which seventh graders who were 2-3 years behind in comprehension served as subjects in reciprocal teaching studies which lasted from 8 weeks to 6 months. The subjects showed remarkable improvement in answering questions on "novel" passages as well as on regular science and social studies materials in their regular classrooms (383-87).

In this study (Parson, 1984) there are problems which overshadow the results obtained and make them very questionable as the author has noted in her paper.

1. The sample size is small (5/group) with accompanying statistical ramifications, and lacks precise description, i.e., developmental lab students.
2. Questions of validity and reliability of tests and materials arise due to a lack of description, i.e., materials from reading lab (not named nor selection procedure outlined) and pertinent information regarding the *Ohio State University Critical Reading Testis* lacking such as the reliability coefficient between the odd and even items which were used as the pre- and post test in this study.
3. The length of the study was limited (3 weeks) and the exact number of sessions is not explicit, i.e., 15?
4. The content of the training procedure needs to be spelled out more explicitly.

Though this study lacks enough information to be replicated, the author presents a very good *qualitative* analysis of her findings. She seems to possess the "vision" that Tierney and Cunningham (1984) have noted a concern for:

When we say that someone has "vision", we generally mean two things. We mean that the person has the ability to see what is possible to achieve or accomplish, given the strongest concerted effort. We also mean that the person has the ability to see how all the parts of a complex operation can fit together and work together dynamically (639-40).

REFERENCES

- Brown, A.L., & Palincsar, A.S. The Palincsar and Brown training studies. In P.D. Pearson (ED.), *Handbook of Reading Research*. New York: Longman, Inc., 1984.
- Cunningham, J., & Tierney, R. Research on teaching reading comprehension. In P.D. Pearson (ED.), *Handbook of Reading Research*, New York: Longman, Inc., 1984.