

## *Book Review / Recension d'ouvrage*

### **Assessment for Reading Instruction, 3rd edition**

by Michael C. McKenna & Katherine A. Dougherty Stahl  
New York, NY/USA: The Guilford Press, 2015, 324 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-4625-2104-3 (paperback)

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As increasing emphasis is placed on the importance of literacy skills, many classroom teachers feel overwhelmed or left behind. Classrooms that exceed student capacity, readers who find themselves well below grade level standards, and government mandates that tie student success to teacher success have placed a tremendous amount of pressure on classroom teachers. With a wide variety of readers and reading levels in one classroom, teachers are often spread too thin and find themselves in need of practical information and tools that will help them advance their students' reading levels. Michael C. McKenna and Katherine A. Dougherty Stahl have created a practical and comprehensive text that covers reading assessment and that gives teachers a wealth of useful knowledge that can be applied directly to their classroom experience. It is clear, concise, and offers real-world examples that will prove invaluable to teachers.

The third edition of *Assessment for Reading Instruction* obviously builds upon the previous two, but within the last six years, several topics have become more prominent in the field of literacy education. Among the most important is the use of response to intervention (RTI) as it relates to literacy education. McKenna and Stahl have written a companion book entitled *Reading Assessment in an RTI Framework* that describes how key assessments fit into the response to intervention (RTI) model (McKenna & Stahl,

2013). This text is meant to work hand in hand with *Assessment for Reading Instruction*. The ever-evolving national focus on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the United States is another reason the authors included vital information to their *Assessment for Reading Instruction* text. With many regions adopting the CCSS or a similar version of it, the realization that vast numbers of students are below grade level readers has flustered educators. There is no one chapter dedicated to Common Core within this text. However, there are CCSS connections within many of the tips, skill sets, and assessments included. Finally, this text includes a chapter that focuses exclusively on vocabulary, its importance, how it can be assessed, and the issues that cause it to be problematic.

The text is divided into eleven chapters. It begins with a basic introduction of reading assessment in which multiple reading models are detailed. This is followed by a description of the general concepts associated with assessment. At the heart of this is an introduction to common assessment tools including what actually constitutes a test, types of tests, norms, validity and reliability. This serves as great introductory information for teachers who need more experience in these areas. This portion of the book is written in a very straightforward, practical manner. The middle chapters focus more on the basics of reading instruction and how to effectively introduce, teach, and assess based on student need. Topics include: informal reading inventories, word recognition and spelling, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. With a diverse spectrum of reading abilities present in most classrooms, this section of the text proves invaluable for the teacher who must work with a wide range of different abilities.

Later chapters emphasize the importance of strategic knowledge and affective factors. Chapter 10 specifically allows us to attempt to delve into the mind of the young reader. The focus on attitudes, the perceived value of reading, and tips for assessing the interests of young readers is intriguing and is followed up by a step by step approach to utilizing a reading survey. Examples include the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey, the Survey of Adolescent Reading Attitude (SARA), the Motivation to Read Profile-Revised (MRP-R) along with scoring guides. Other practical information is also included. The final chapter walks the reader through the process of preparing a diagnostic reading report. As with the rest of the text, the information is presented in a very clear, concise, and direct manner. Finally, two case studies are presented in the appendices that allow the reader to think about the skills and concepts presented within the text and apply them situationally.

In essence, *Assessment for Reading Instruction* is a practical text that has the potential to be a useful tool for classroom teachers who realize that assessment and instruction are not separate entities. The true substance presented here comes from helping teachers navigate the assessment process. Teachers are shown how to use formal and informal assessments within their classroom, including how to effectively choose, conduct, and interpret the results from the assessment process.

## **References**

McKenna, M. & Stahl, K. (2013). *Reading Assessment in an RTI framework*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.