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## Test Review: Standford Diagnostic

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# TEST REVIEW:

## STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC

by Ann Laing Dilly

The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Level II is made up of six subtests: comprehension, vocabulary, syllabication, sound discrimination, blending, and rate. It is the belief of the authors that although comprehension is not the same thing as reading, it is the goal of reading. Therefore, each subsequent subtest is viewed as an essential skill or means to that end.

The construction of the various subtests and their relationship to comprehension are excellent. The comprehension test is divided into two types: literal, and inferential. By comparing these scores to each other and to other tests, such as rate, for example, the tester can obtain a great deal more information than from a simple comprehension score.

The vocabulary test measures hearing vocabulary and is therefore a measure of potential and/or readiness rather than reading. The test does not seem to suffer from the lack of a word recognition or reading vocabulary measures. The literal comprehension section covers this skill more meaningfully than an isolated word list would.

The syllabication test is carefully controlled to include only

the three major rules of syllabication. Sound Discrimination emphasizes the similarities of actual sounds regardless of spelling. Thus, both give extremely valuable and meaningful results.

The blending section requires the proper blending of sounds to make a real word. This is much superior to the similar section of the Spache Diagnostic Reading Scales, for example, which requires merely the correct sound of isolated blends.

The rate test seems unique from most tests and is particularly good. The student is required to fill in blanks, which occur in every three lines, by choosing the best word from three choices. The choices are not particularly difficult so as to be a word recognition task but provide appropriate blanks in context to require understanding of what is read. This insures the rate of comprehension, and does not allow for skimming.

One criticism of the SDRT is its legibility for readers with perceptual problems. Although well organized and clear, it could be confusing, for example in the syllabication section, for students of this type.

The manual for the SDRT is

excellent. It includes many valuable suggestions for interpreting and comparing scores, for remedial work in a group and individual basis. It includes several case studies of individual and classes and discusses at some length the order of difficulty of various skills and suggestions for teaching each.

The norms of the SDRT are expressed as stanines. A grade score may also be derived for the subtest in comprehension. The test could be criticized for not having extensive enough tables to allow for upper stanines on some of the subtest. However, as the manual explicitly states, the purpose to the SDRT is to ascertain weaknesses, not strengths. Attention, therefore, is correctly focused on the lower stanine scores.

The authors could also be criticized for advocating the use of these tests with subjects for whom they have not been standardized. They propose that a high school student who reads below fourth grade level be given level II. Stanines for each subtest are derived from tables of the grade level the student achieves in the comprehension section. Thus the information does not relate the student to his actual peers, but

rather offers a profile of his own abilities at his general level of reading achievement. This seems far superior to giving this student a test standardized at his age and grade level that he cannot read!

The greatest criticism of the SDRT is in the manual's statistical information. It is very confusing and although full of interesting comparisons to the Stanford Achievement Test: Reading Tests, and correlations among subtests and alternate forms, it fails to state clearly its actual validity or reliability. Also, no information was given concerning the location or composition of the sample group.

However, item analysis, construction, and standardization procedures are discussed in the manual and appear sound, in spite of some omissions. Also the best of this test seems to be to discover the relative profile of a student's own abilities, not to compare him to national norms.

Therefore, keeping this in mind, an examiner can make excellent diagnostic use of the SDRT.

(Mrs. Dilly is a Reading Teacher at Ferndale High School.)

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## EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS APPRAISE THEIR SCIENCE TEXT

(Continued from page 34)

raise the oven temperature if we use a glass baking dish like our teacher showed us. We bake. We don't heat tacks sunk in melted wax

very often, but we do bake."

(Mrs. Lavigne is presently a Reading Teacher in the Farmington Public Schools.)