ASSESSING READING DIFFICULTIES

A diagnostic and remedial approach

LYNETTE BRADLEY

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Tests and Assessment Advisory Board

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University of Reading.**

**Bridie Raban, Department of Educational Studies,
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**Denis R Vincent, Reader in Education, North
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Preface

We have always known that it is important to foster the young child's developing language skills. Now we have clear evidence, from research, that word play and rhyming games in the pre-school years have a distinct impact on reading and spelling when the child goes to school.⁴⁸

Over 400 young children were tested on their ability to hear rhyme and alliteration in spoken words (Test 2). None of the children had learned to read. When their reading skills were tested three years later, those who had scored well on the word sound test could read and spell significantly better than those who had scored poorly. Children who scored poorly on this test who were then trained in sound recognition, made remarkable progress in spelling as well as in reading.

It is difficult to discover why a non-reader cannot read using conventional reading tests. This research shows that skill at sound categorisation is important for reading and spelling and can be tested in the non-reader. Test 1, identifies young children and backward readers or non-readers of any age who need special help with sound categorisation. Test 2, can be used with older backward readers. Both tests can be used with children or adults who cannot read or who cannot spell, to identify problems with sound categorisation.

The methods that were used so successfully in the training study were originally developed in successful remedial work with children with severe reading and spelling problems. These methods are outlined in the 'Remediation' section. *Sound Pictures*, the training package, was developed to help pre-readers master sound categorisation skills before they meet words in print.

This revised edition attempts not only to provide new and additional information, but also to make the test more accessible to the practising classroom teacher. Instructions for using the test have been explained and clarified, and there is a new summary of instructions for daily, routine use.

Oxford, January, 1984