

Title: “Engaged Assessment of Engaged Readers”

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Subject(s): Assessment, Motivation

Grade Level: All

Synopsis: The chapter discusses ways to assess readers’ levels of engagement. First, engaged reading is described: Engaged readers are knowledgeable, strategic, critical, and motivated as they read. Engaged reading occurs in *episodes*, in which the comprehension of text is the midpoint. An example is given of a unit on ancient Egypt: students bring to it their background knowledge and motivations, and they respond to what they read in various ways. Then the author outlines the strengths and weaknesses of various forms of assessment for engaged reading, including paper-and-pencil measures such as checklists, observation forms, and questionnaires; performance assessments; and portfolio assessment. All of these have drawbacks, but all are effective ways to assess engaged reading. He also discusses the teacher’s role in assessing engaged reading and students’ self-assessment.

Finally, the author draws on his own research to explore issues of communication and coordination related to reading assessment. Communication of the nature and purpose of any assessment to all affected parties (teachers, students, parents, community members) is extremely important, and the author has evidence that this communication is often poor. Coordination of assessments is crucial, since state-mandated tests compete for time and resources with school assessments. It is important that any assessment provide useful information that is not redundant.

Quote(s): “Well-designed performance assessments can measure important student outcomes throughout intact episodes of engaged reading.” (p. 198)

“Portfolios can provide particularly rich information about student reading, its precursors and results, and literate activity related to reading. In addition, portfolios can provide the context in which students develop expertise in assessing their own performance.” (p. 200)

“The classroom teacher is ideally situated to observe and assess students’ engaged reading, to help explain students’ reading to parents and administrators, and to provide useful feedback to students.” (p. 201)

“Without attention to helping students develop the ability to assess and evaluate their own progress in reading, instructional programs may not fully prepare students to be engaged, independent readers.” (p. 203)

“The more sensitive assessment is to the myriad of factors that influence reading performance and the myriad outcomes of reading, the greater the effectiveness and utility of the assessment will be.” (p. 212)

