

CLOZE Testing in Reading Comprehension

by Kenyon L. Moss

Using the Reader's Digest *New Reading Skill Builder* books on levels II and VI, twelve students from a mixed 7th and 8th grade English class were tested with the Cloze procedure to determine each student's reading ability.

The regular class teacher had already selected these students for help in reading. The E.S.L. teacher, after giving the test, can place each student on the levels he needs to begin reading. Further testing on additional levels can place a student on a more specific level.

Since many of the students were culturally oriented to the islands of the Pacific, the two articles selected were chosen because they were somewhat related to Hawaii and Tahiti.

The selection on level II used more dialogue than level VI selection which was mainly narrative.

Except for the first and last sentences, which were left complete, every sixth word in the selections was left blank. The students had to supply the right word for each blank.

In evaluating this test, any word that would correctly fill in the blank was acceptable. The important thing is that the meaning of the sentence, or phrase, is not changed. For example, "I have a _____ job in the Islands." Either "good" or "new" would be acceptable.

It has been suggested that there should be at least 40 blanks for Cloze testing. However, closer evaluation is obtained with a greater number of fill ins.

Of the twelve students who took the test, only three scored above 70% in level II and none scored above 80%, which was considered passing. In level VI, there were none above 60%.

Individualized testing can be done as each student progresses in reading ability.

The following bibliography of recent articles may be helpful for anyone seeking information on Cloze testing and its use in both native and second language students.

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Oller, John W., Jr. "Controversies in Linguistics and Language Teaching," *Workpapers, Teaching English as a Second Language* Vol. 6 June 1972.

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