SECTION I

Introduction

SECTION GUIDE
What Is an Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)?
Description of the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI)
Description of the ARI Ninth Edition, Section-by-Section
Informal Reading Inventory Background Knowledge
WHAT IS AN INFORMAL READING INVENTORY?

An informal reading inventory (IRI) is an authentic standards-based assessment. It is composed of a series of reading passages that begin at preprimer level and progressively become more difficult. As a reader progresses from easier passages to more difficult ones, the examiner records, analyzes, and summarizes data that reflect the reader’s application or default of standards and indicators of reading competency: prior knowledge/prediction, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. Knowing informal reading inventory data enables classroom teachers, reading specialists, and school psychologists to make evidence-based instructional decisions and to report student progress in standards-based terms. Standardized testing does not provide such detailed, instructionally connected data.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ANALYTICAL READING INVENTORY (ARI)

The Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI) is an individually administered research-based informal reading inventory that assesses a reader with both narrative and expository text. The ARI offers some features not found in other IRIs.

What Features Distinguish the ARI from Some Other IRIs?

▶ Examiner’s Passage Layout

The examiner’s passage layout, organized with grids and textboxes, makes it easy for you to record, analyze, summarize, and report all of the standards-based data assessed by the ARI. The line-for-line match between the reader’s passages and the examiner’s passages enables you to easily record data and accurately analyze the contextual nature of the reader’s miscues.

▶ ARI Manual Organization

The ARI manual is organized to support users who are acquiring beginning knowledge of research-based informal assessment and others who have more advanced knowledge and experience. Section IV, called ARI Basics, includes clear-cut directions, background information, and matching practice examples. Section V, called ARI Advanced, includes in-depth explanations and practice examples for qualitative data, two instructional levels, and ARI Quick Assessment.

▶ ARI DVD

The ARI DVD contains:

† Lecture Visuals (Show it!)
✓ Audio Clips (Listen to it!)
☑ Templates (Type or write on it!)
‡ Video Clips (Watch it!)

▶ ARI Basics

The directions for administering the ARI are presented step-by-step for each standard and accompanying indicators of reading competency. Paired on the facing page of each detailed direction step is research information (What You Need to Know About . . . ) and audio practice examples. This side-by-side layout causes your ARI learning experience to be supportive, logical, and uniquely convenient.
ARI Progress Monitoring System

The ARI Progress Monitoring System provides DVD access to the ARI examiner’s passage templates. On each template you can type a short passage from a novel or textbook that is to be taught, or is currently being taught, in your classroom. One clear advantage of this system is that it provides you with unlimited sources for passages, and in turn creates the perfect assessment material for progress monitoring.

Examiner passage template analysis covers prior knowledge/prediction, oral reading miscue, fluency, and retelling. To administer and summarize results for this detailed assessment, follow the ARI Step-by-Step Directions.

The primary advantage of the ARI Progress Monitoring System is that data collection is not time consuming. Data collection requires no more than 10 minutes per student, and the data summary sheet is check-list quick. The ARI Progress Monitoring System enables you to implement frequent RTI assessment sessions.

ARI Case Study

The ARI Case Study provides a comprehensive audio example of a reader from the independent to the frustration level. Complete written documentation is included in the ARI manual, allowing you to use it as a case study model, an independent practice example, and an answer key.

ARI Transition to Instruction

This section explains the transitional link between ARI assessment experience and instructional intervention. It includes instructional intervention strategies for prior knowledge/prediction, oral reading miscues, fluency, retellings, and comprehension responses. Each intervention is accompanied by an RTI quick assessment form, called ARI Intervention Data Collection.

ARI Reader’s Passage Booklet

The Reader’s Passages booklet is separately bound. This makes the reader’s passages easy to find and makes preparation for administering the ARI easier.

Who Uses the Analytical Reading Inventory (ARI)?

Undergraduate students enrolled in teacher preparation courses use the ARI during course work and student teaching experiences. Graduate students seeking advanced degrees in language education use the ARI in both the classroom and clinical settings. Elementary/secondary classroom teachers, reading specialists, and school psychologists use the ARI to collect standards-based data; to select, teach, and monitor evidence-based student groupings; and to report student progress. University professors who teach education courses and elementary/secondary school staff developers use the ARI to train pre-service and in-service teachers.

Which Students Should Be Given the ARI?

It is important that teachers record comprehensive standards-based data and monitor the progress of all students: gifted, remedial, and all readers in between! Students—kindergarten through high school—can be given the ARI.
Regardless of their ages or grade levels, all types of readers are sitting in today’s classrooms. They include talented children who are reading far ahead of their peers; talented children who are experiencing difficulties; children who have been experiencing reading problems since the beginning of school; children who are encountering difficulties as the assignments become more complex; and children who are reading consistently in the average range. Teachers are held accountable for collecting standards-based data and monitoring the progress of all readers in their classrooms. Beyond assessment, teachers are also held accountable for delivering standards-based instructional intervention. Because students’ success in school depends on their ability to read, teachers need to know as much as possible about how the students in their classrooms, reading labs, and gifted programs process text.

**When Can the ARI Be Administered?**

Three forms (Forms A, B, and C) of narrative passages are included, so you, the examiner, can collect data at the beginning of the school year and periodically reevaluate a reader’s progress. The ARI Progress Monitoring System increases the number of available passages and, therefore, increases the opportunity for periodic reassessment.

**How Is ARI Data Reported?**

*Why Should ARI Data Be Kept in an Academic File?*

ARI data is to be reported during student and parent conferences, passed along to a student’s forthcoming teachers, and shared with specialists and other educators. The examiner’s passages and the ARI Profile Record: Reader Summary are so logically organized that a teacher is able to discuss the data directly from the forms. Transferring data or rewriting data is unnecessary. It is important to include ARI data in the student’s academic file because:

1) the records provide comprehensive, detailed, authentic information about the student’s reading ability

2) ARI standards-based data is displayed within the context of a full passage and over a series of passages

3) the data can be reviewed and used to make evidence-based grouping placement and instructional intervention decisions

**DESCRIPTION OF THE ARI NINTH EDITION MANUAL, SECTION-BY-SECTION**

Whether you are just beginning to acquire informal assessment knowledge, or whether you have or will need more advanced knowledge and experience, the ARI Ninth Edition manual is conveniently organized to meet your assessment needs. This subsection briefly describes each section of the ARI Ninth Edition manual.

**SECTION I  Introduction**

This introduction defines informal reading inventory, describes the ARI and its distinguishing features, outlines each section in the ARI Ninth Edition manual, and explains informal reading inventory background knowledge that is essential to understanding informal assessment.
SECTION II  ARI Examiner’s Passage Layout, A Distinguished Feature

The ARI examiner’s passage offers layout features not found in most other informal reading inventories. These distinguishable layout features appear in narrative Forms A, B, C; expository Forms S and SS, and the examiner’s passage templates introduced in the ARI Progress Monitoring System.

1) The examiner’s passage layout provides a line-for-line match between the reader’s passages and the examiner’s passages, enabling you to record and analyze a miscue in its exact, vital context. Without an analysis of the surrounding context of a miscue, you are unable to accurately determine its cause.

2) The examiner’s passage layout organizes all ARI assessment elements in textboxes and grids, making it easy for you to record, summarize, and report data. Coverage of all standards and indicators of reading competency is comprehensive, including:
   - prior knowledge/prediction
   - oral reading miscues (phonics, vocabulary, language in use)
   - fluency
   - retelling/summary statement
   - comprehension question responses/RTR

In this section you will study the sample examiner’s passage, the accompanying practice examples, and the audio clip. This listen-and-practice format provides you with the support you need to understand the ARI’s distinguished, easy-to-use layout, and its comprehensive standards-based coverage.

SECTION III  ARI Case Study

The ARI Case Study provides a comprehensive audio DVD example of a reader from the independent to the frustration level. Complete written documentation is included in the ARI manual, allowing you to use it as a case study model, an independent practice example, and an answer key.

SECTION IV  ARI Basics

This section begins with the Short Form: Step-by-Step Directions, an outline set of directions and listing of the standards and indicators of reading competency.

Following the short form is a clear, straight forward, comprehensive set of step-by-step directions. On the facing page of each direction step is brief, yet essential, research information about the step (What You Need to Know About . . .). Following the research information are audio or video DVD practice examples related to that particular step. All ARI charts and profile records are located with the corresponding direction step. This unique, side-by-side page layout organizes all basic information in one location and causes your ARI learning experience to be uniquely convenient.
SECTION V  *ARI Advanced*

Advanced information and audio practice examples are provided for university professors, staff developers, school psychologists, classroom teachers, graduate students, and others responsible for in-depth assessment administration and reporting. This section includes a detailed description of quantitative and qualitative data, the two instructional levels, and directions for how to administer an *ARI Quick Assessment*.

SECTION VI  *ARI Progress Monitoring System*

The *ARI Progress Monitoring System* provides DVD access to the *ARI examiner’s passage templates*. On the template, you can type a short passage from a novel or textbook that is to be taught, or is currently being taught, in your classroom. One clear advantage of this system is that it provides you with unlimited sources for passages, and in turn creates the perfect assessment material for progress monitoring.

Examiner passage template analysis covers prior knowledge/prediction, oral reading miscues, fluency, and retelling. To administer and summarize results for this detailed assessment, follow the *ARI Step-by-Step Directions*.

The primary advantage of the *ARI Progress Monitoring System* is that data collection is not time consuming. Data collection requires no more than 10 minutes per student, and the data summary sheet is check-list quick. The *ARI Progress Monitoring System* enables you to implement frequent RTI assessment sessions.

SECTION VII  *ARI Transition to Instruction*

This section explains the transitional link between *ARI* assessment experience and instructional intervention. As you repeatedly give the *ARI*, listening, recording, summarizing, and reporting, you hone essential teacher skills that are on the cutting edge of instructional intervention. This section includes instructional intervention strategies for prior knowledge/prediction, oral reading miscues, fluency, retellings, and comprehension responses. Each intervention is accompanied by an RTI quick assessment form, called the *ARI Intervention Data Collection*.

SECTION VIII  *ARI Examiner’s Passages*

The examiner’s passages you need for recording data are included in this section.

- Forms A, B, and C: Word Lists and Narrative passages, preprimer–nine
- Forms S (science) and SS (social studies): Expository passages, one–nine

SECTION IX  *ARI Development and Validation*

Considerable effort was devoted toward establishing the content validity and passage level accuracy of the *ARI* reader’s passages. This section is divided into the following subsections:

- *ARI Coverage of National Standards and Indicators*
- *Content Selection for Reader’s Passages*
- *Readability and Vocabulary Diversity Results*
- *Field Testing*
- *Illustrations at Preprimer, Primer, and Level 1*
- *Inter-Scorer Reliability Study*
SECTION X  Appendix

This section includes the answer keys that correspond to each of the practice examples. It also provides references for research and instruction and the content of the narrative and expository passages.

Inside the Back Cover

Inside the back cover is the ARI DVD and an outline of the DVD menu.

ARI Reader’s Passages (thin spiral book)

The Reader’s Passages book includes word lists and all narrative and expository passages. It is separately bound and is ready-to-use; no copying is required. It includes:

- Forms A, B, and C: Word Lists and Narrative passages, preprimer–nine
- Forms S (science) and SS (social studies): Expository passages, one–nine

INFORMAL READING INVENTORY
BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

As an examiner, you are called upon to make decisions during the process of giving an informal reading inventory, so you must have some background knowledge related to informal assessment. With an understanding of the information included in this subsection, you will have background knowledge that prepares you for using an informal reading inventory.

What Is the Difference Between Examiner Behaviors During Assessment and Teacher Behaviors During Instruction?

When administering an informal reading inventory, an examiner should think: “My job is to find out what standards and indicators of reading competency this reader applies or defaults. The data I discover about this reader will be used to teach him how to improve his reading.” The fundamental purpose of informal reading inventory assessment is to record, analyze, and summarize data, whereas the purpose of instruction is to facilitate the reader’s development. In essence, assessment is not instruction.

This means that during assessment, you will provide little or no assistance. The reason this distinction between examiner behaviors and teacher behaviors is so vitally important is that if it is clear to the reader that you are assessing rather than teaching, he will know that he is to respond independent of your help. The rule of thumb during assessment is to assist as little as possible—assess, don’t teach.

What Do You Need to Know About Oral and Silent Reading?

Oral reading serves an important function during assessment. If the reader did not read aloud, you would not be able to hear and observe the standards and indicators a reader uses to recognize words and process the meaning of the text; therefore, the ARI is an oral reading assessment. However, in certain situations a student may process the information more efficiently while reading silently. For example, a very competent student may read more rapidly and efficiently while reading silently, or a student experiencing excessive stress while reading orally may be more efficient while reading silently.
You will be able to sense when a competent reader becomes impatient and bogged down by the oral reading. Likewise, you will sense if a struggling reader is overly stressed during oral reading. In that case, you might wonder if he might do better when reading silently. To determine if you should ask a student to read silently, you should take into consideration qualitative factors, such as the reader’s emotional status, fluency, his use of prior knowledge and prediction, and the quality of the retelling. If you decide to ask him to read silently, choose a passage from an alternate ARI form.

**How Does the ARI Assess Fluency and Reading Pace?**

Assessment data should be collected in a manner that corresponds to how a reader engages during real reading (Rasinski & Lenhart, 2007). The ARI requires the examiner to become a thoughtful, keen listener, and to determine the quality of a reader’s fluency with a combination of factors that replicate authentic reading.

ARI fluency assessment data is first derived from the comprehensive attention given to the coding and counting of oral miscues, omissions, insertions, substitutions, aided words, reversals, and repetitions. Other assessed indicators of fluency are the non-counted but coded miscues, hesitations, and the ignoring of punctuation. The layout of each ARI examiner’s passage is designed so an examiner can see the flow of this data.

Attached beneath the examiner’s passage is the fluency summary box. After the reader has completed the oral reading of the passage, the examiner is required to analyze and record the reader’s fluency which includes features of prosody (Rasinski, 2004). Rasinski cites other researchers,—such as Dowhower, Schreiber, and Read—who refer to prosody as voice qualities such as stress, intonation, pitch, phrasing, and expression. All these convey a reader’s ability to comprehend the text. The ARI requires an examiner to develop keen standards-based listening skills, enabling you to automatically pick up this data as the student reads. These same listening skills serve a teacher during instructional intervention as well. An essential match between assessment and instructional intervention is authenticity. Recommendations for instructional intervention must be grounded in the logic of authentic assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency: Does the Reader . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ read smoothly, accurately, in meaningful phrases?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ read word-by-word, choppy, plodding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ use pitch, stress, and intonation to convey meaning of the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ repeat words and phrases because s/he is monitoring the meaning (self-correcting)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ repeat words and phrases because s/he is trying to sound out words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ use punctuation to divide the text into units of meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ ignore the punctuation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rating Scale: Circle One

4 = fluent reading / good pace  
3 = fairly fluent / reasonable pace  
2 = choppy, plodding reading / slow pace  
1 = clearly labored, disfluent reading / very slow pace

The rating scale at the bottom of the fluency box requires the examiner to synthesize fluency factors by selecting an overall rating of the reader’s pace. A reader’s pace can vary within a passage due to the reader’s ability and his familiarity with the content of the text.
Over a series of passages, the examiner should analyze a reader’s pace looking for a consistent pace across passages, a progression from good pace to a very slow pace, or a sharp pacing variance among passages. Then ask, “What overall factors are affecting the reader’s pace?”

Do Readers Comprehend Narrative Passages Better Than Expository Passages?

Both narrative and expository passages are included in the ARI. The narrative passages are like stories found in reading or literature textbooks. The expository passages are like text found in science or social studies textbooks. Because narrative and expository texts are structured differently, some researchers (McGee & Richgels, 1985; Meyer & Rice, 1984; Piccolo, 1987; Vacca & Vacca, 2007) assume that most students enter kindergarten with a basic understanding of narrative story-like structure, causing narrative text to be more comprehensible than expository text. Others, including Pappas (1993), found that expository text is as understandable for primary students, and therefore suggest that the difficulty students encounter with expository text is caused when the instructional emphasis is placed mostly on narrative text.

During the preparation of the fourth edition of the ARI, field testing was conducted. The purpose of the study was to find out if readers perceived the difference between narrative and expository text. Among three ARI passages, which passage did readers perceive to be the most difficult to comprehend and what were the reasons for the difficulty? Eighty-six students from grades two through eight (Orchard School, Indianapolis, Indiana) participated in the study. Each student selected for the study was able to read one type of text at the instructional level.

For example, a fourth grader was given three unmarked ARI Level 4 passages; one narrative, one science, and one social studies. He was asked to read all three passages and write a summary statement for each one. To ensure he comprehended each passage, the examiner assessed prior knowledge, required retellings and summary statements, and asked comprehension questions. Finally, the reader was asked to rank the three passages from hardest to the easiest and to explain why he ranked each in that position.

In almost every instance, students at each grade level, two through eight, ranked the narrative passage easier than the expository passages. Most students quickly sensed the difference between the two writing styles. Many referred to narrative text as story while the expository text was called science or social studies facts. In six instances, a social studies or science passage was ranked as the easiest but only in cases where readers had a lot of prior knowledge.

The results of this study showed that students found expository text harder to read than narrative text. Without the structure of a story, readers reported that they had to expend more mental energy to recall and interpret the information in the expository texts. Common complaints were related to the difficulty in recalling a series of details and pronouncing and understanding content area vocabulary. One sixth grader vented his feelings about the Level 6 social studies passage. “After I read the first sentence, I had trouble getting the rest. Somehow I just kept forgetting the stuff. I had to stop and think at the end of each sentence, and then try to get it. It was like a mind twister!”

The students’ comments about the passages proved to be revealing, not only about the issue of narrative versus expository text elements, but also about what readers do to acquire meaning. The table that follows reveals the thoughts that traveled through the minds of the students as they reflected about the passages. It is important to make you aware that most students perceive expository text to be more difficult than narrative text, and therefore, may process the expository text with more difficulty.

From ARI, refer to:
Section IV, ARI Basics, Step-by-Step Directions, for detailed information about expository and narrative text.
(p. XX)
What Do You Need to Know About Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis?

In the past, users of informal reading inventories relied on a system for reporting results where all deviations from the text were tabulated. This procedure was referred to as a *quantitative analysis* (Pikulski, 1974) because deviations were simply counted and a score was computed with no regard for the quality of the error.

Since the 1970s, the word *miscue* has been widely used in informal assessment (Goodman, 1973; Goodman & Burke, 1976). A miscue is defined as a deviation from the text. Miscue analysis implies that an analysis of the quality of the miscue re-
veals important information about the reader’s competency. For example, if a student substitutes the word the for a, indicating no change in the meaning of the text, the miscue is not as severe as the substitution of the word thought for through, which substantially changes the meaning. Focusing on meaning, the examiner must analyze miscues within a single passage and across passages to gain accurate assessment.

To obtain a multi-dimensional profile, it is necessary to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. Determining the results of the Analytical Reading Inventory involves more than just counting miscues and comprehension errors. Instead, the examiner combines miscue and comprehension error counts with a reader’s use of prior knowledge, cueing system analysis, fluency, retelling summary ability, comprehension question responses (both literal and inferential), reader text relationship (RTR), and emotional status.