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ABSTRACT

A checklist to rate competencies of college reading specialists is presented, along with background information about the instrument. Based on a review of the literature on professional standards for specialists, five broad categories of competencies were developed: undergraduate training, instruction, research and measurement, administrative and counseling, and personal characteristics. The checklist, called "The College Reading Competency Checklist," can be used in at least four situations: by a reading teacher search committee, for supervision of undergraduate and graduate practicums in college reading, for supervision and review of reading specialists, and for self-evaluation. When using the checklist, the evaluator ranks the specialist's competencies on a three-point scale ranging from low to high. Under each of the five broad categories, skill competencies and knowledge prerequisites are detailed. For example, under the category of "instruction," the first skill is the ability to individualize instruction. The numbers next to this skill denote that it was cited six times in the literature, and the exact sources can be determined by looking at the corresponding numbers in the appended reference section. (SW)

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College Reading and Learning Assistance
Technical Report 84-04

Focusing on Standards: A Checklist for Rating
Competencies of College Reading Specialists

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The past two decades witnessed considerable growth in the number of colleges and universities reporting the existence of reading and study-skills courses, learning assistance centers, writing labs and peer-tutoring programs. By 1980 Sullivan (1980) observed that there were nearly 2,000 college learning centers in the United States and Canada. Never before has there been a greater need for trained reading and study-skills Specialists (hereafter referred to as Specialists) to staff these programs. In spite of the continuing need, professional educators have yet to agree upon a set of generally accepted qualifications, instructional experiences and credentials for Specialists (Simpson, 1983; Stahl, 1981).

It was not until the early 1960's that the subject of standards for Specialists began to surface in the literature. Since then, several leaders in the field have put forth personal observations and recommendations concerning professional standards for Specialists. Furthermore, several surveys can be found which detail ideal training programs. In essence, all have attempted to answer the question: What competencies should the Specialist possess?

Upon completion of a comprehensive review of the literature on professional standards for Specialists (Stahl, 1981, Stahl, Brozo, & Gordon, 1984), the authors discovered that these standards had yet to be presented in a way which facilitates application to practical settings. This desire to operationalize the recommendations from 19 sources in the literature led to a synthesis of skills, knowledge and attitudes which were later

organized around five broad categories (Undergraduate Training, Instruction, Research and Measurement, Administrative and Counseling, and Personal Characteristics). What was to evolve from this process is "The College Reading Competency Checklist (CRSCC)."

The CRSCC is designed to evaluate Specialist's competencies in at least four common situations:

1. A search committee might use the CRSCC to help focus the interview on the candidate's qualifications and then later for comparing candidates;

2. Supervising professors of undergraduate and graduate practicums in college reading might use the CRSCC diagnostically to evaluate competencies of pre-service Specialists and to suggest subsequent instructional experiences;

3. Professors and Administrators responsible for periodic reviews might utilize the CRSCC when discussing professional growth and work progress of Specialists under their supervision;

4. Specialists might use the CRSCC to monitor their own growth as professionals in the field of college reading.

How to Use the CRSCC

As was mentioned above, the CRSCC is organized around five categories. Subsumed under the categories of Undergraduate Training, Instruction, Research and Measurement, and Administrative and Counseling are specific sections detailing skills competencies and knowledge prerequisites. For example, under the category of Instruction, the first skill is the ability to individualize instruction. The numbers next to this particular

skill denote that it was cited six times in the literature, and the exact sources can be determined by looking at the corresponding numbers in the reference section. The fifth broad category, Personal Characteristics, does not contain a list of skills and knowledge but rather a list of ideal attitudes for the Specialist. The reader will notice that at the end of each section of the CRSCC the evaluator has the opportunity to include institution-specific competencies. When using the CRSCC the evaluator ranks the Specialist's competencies on a three-point scale ranging from low to high.

It should be stressed that beyond its obvious logical validity no technical data has been gathered on the CRSCC. To reiterate, the intent was not to create a formalized, all inclusive rating scale comprised of a definitive list of competencies that guarantee success; rather the intent was to operationalize the numerous recommendations and survey findings drawn from the literature.

A Final Word

Relying solely on this checklist or any other informal measure for the purposes of candidate evaluation, practicum evaluation, personnel evaluation or self evaluation is likely to be insufficient for making prudent decisions. Nevertheless, in the decision-making process, the CRSCC can serve as one valuable tool along with traditional methods (i.e., interviews, observations of performance, etc.) for assessing the competencies held by reading and study-skills Specialists.

THE COLLEGE READING SPECIALIST COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Directions: Please indicate the degree to which the candidate possesses each competency.

Undergraduate Training

Low Medium High

Skills

- 1) Ability to read well with a command of all basic skills to be taught to college readers (3, 13)

Additional Competencies:

Knowledge

- 1) Possesses a broad academic background (1, 13, 16)

- 2) Knowledgeable of the sciences (13)

- 3) Knowledgeable of the humanities (13)

- 4) Knowledgeable of the social sciences (2, 13)

- 5) Knowledgeable of reading methods (2)

Additional Competencies:

Instruction

Skills

- 1) Ability to individualize instruction (2, 3, 6, 12, 13, 17)

- 2) Ability to group for instruction (2, 3, 16)

Low Medium High

3) Ability to use a variety of techniques for teaching college reading and study skills (5, 8, 12, 18)

Specific Components

- a) comprehension (3, 7, 12, 18)
- b) critical reading (18)
- c) rate/flexibility (3, 7, 12, 18)
- d) reference skills (12)
- e) retention/memory skills (12)
- f) spelling (9, 12)
- g) study reading (3, 9, 12, 18)
- h) test taking skills (7, 9, 12)
- i) time management (12, 14)
- j) vocabulary development (7, 9, 12, 18)

4) Ability to integrate the language arts into the instructional program (13, 14)

5) Ability to devise original materials (1, 8, 9, 14, 19)

6) Ability to match materials to students' needs (6, 12, 13)

7) Ability to plan instructional activities directly supportive of the students' mastery of subject matter (16, 18)

8) Ability to evaluate commercial instructional material (14)

Additional Competencies:

Knowledge

1) Knowledgeable of theories and models of learning and reading (2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18)

2) Knowledgeable of psychological and sociological literature concerning developmental and remedial college readers (12)

Low Medium High

- 3) Knowledgeable of published instructional materials (9, 12, 13, 18)
- 4) Knowledgeable of college course content for planning instruction (16, 18)

Additional Competencies:

Research and Measurement

Skills

- 1) Ability to use informal diagnostic procedures (2, 8, 9, 12, 15, 17)
- 2) Ability to develop informal diagnostic procedures (5, 6, 12, 15)
- 3) Ability to administer, score and interpret formal standardized diagnostic tests (2, 8, 9, 12, 17)
- 4) Ability to critically evaluate the quality of instruments (2, 8, 12, 14, 18)
- 5) Ability to diagnose learning problems and evaluate student progress using tests, interviews, and case studies (3, 9, 14)
- 6) Ability to use formal and informal achievement measures (1, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18)
- 7) Ability to apply research skills to the evaluation of instruction and curriculum (15, 18)
- 8) Ability to conduct research and apply findings (4, 6, 9, 11, 18)

Additional Competencies:

Low Medium High

Knowledge

- 1) Knowledgeable of the research literature and its practical applications (4, 9, 14, 18)
- 2) Knowledgeable of the literature regarding effective teaching and learning in higher education (4)
- 3) Knowledgeable of current studies in developmental, late adolescent, and adult psychology (3, 4, 6)
- 4) Knowledgeable of statistics and research design (6, 13, 14)

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Additional Competencies:

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Administrative and Counseling

Skills

- 1) Ability to supervise professionals (1, 9)
- 2) Ability to provide appropriate training experiences for staff (1, 8, 9, 12, 18)
- 3) Ability to serve as a college reading consultant on and off campus (8, 14, 18)
- 4) Ability to interact with and train content area teachers (8, 9, 12, 18, 19)
- 5) Ability to set program goals and objectives (1, 12)
- 6) Ability to develop learning programs (1, 18)
- 7) Ability to budget programs (1, 8, 12, 14)
- 8) Ability to engage in public relations and conduct advertising for programs (10, 11)

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Low Medium High

- 9) Ability to publish in-house program evaluation data in the form of annual reports (10, 12) _____
- 10) Ability to develop and maintain relationships with academic department (2, 10, 11, 18) _____
- 11) Ability to serve on campus-wide committees (11) _____
- 12) Ability to refer and direct students to appropriate campus agencies (11) _____

Additional Competencies:

Knowledge

- 1) Knowledgeable of institutional traditions and requirements (11) _____
- 2) Knowledgeable of the organization of curricula and courses within academic units (6) _____
- 3) Knowledgeable of the courses with high failure rates (12) _____
- 4) Knowledgeable of the history and role of the college reading program on the Specialist's campus (11) _____
- 5) Knowledgeable of scheduling procedures, campus regulations, transfer and graduation requirements (8) _____

Additional Competencies:



Low Medium High

Personal Characteristics

Attitudes

- 1) Genuine positive regard for students from varied socioeconomic and academic backgrounds (5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18)
- 2) True desire to assist young adults to meet their career objectives (12)
- 3) Empathetic towards the problems students encounter in their coursework (2, 5, 11, 18)
- 4) Flexible and willing to meet programmatic procedures and instruction to meet students' needs (5, 6, 13)
- 5) Creativity in developing student-centered learning programs (13)
- 6) Perservance in the face of adversity (6)
- 7) Feelings of self-worth (16).
- 8) Strong commitment to the college reading program and profession (5, 17, 18)

Low	Medium	High
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Additional Competencies:

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