

## BOOK LEVELLING

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### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to maximize the reading progress of their students, teachers need to provide reading material at an appropriate instructional level. If this does not happen, students may be reading texts that are either too easy or too difficult. Often, students are required to read material at their grade level, and this may not be appropriate. If students are reading material that is too easy, they have little or no opportunity to learn. If, on the other hand, the material is too difficult, students may experience frustration.

### PROPOSED SOLUTION/ INTERVENTION

Reading text at the right level of difficulty is particularly important for beginning readers and students with reading problems, as it provides them with a manageable challenge. In order to achieve this, students should be matched to instructionally appropriate text. It is important to be able to match students to books in both basal reading series' and 'real' books so as to provide a balanced reading program.

### THE THEORETICAL RATIONALE — HOW DOES IT WORK?

A system of levelled books works on the assumption that as students' reading improves, they are able to read progressively more difficult text. In order to match students to texts at the right level, the difficulty level of texts must be estimated. There are many levelling procedures available, for example, Reading Recovery Book Levels, MULTILIT Book Levels, and The Lexile Framework® for Reading.

Within a system of levelled texts, initial matching of

students to levelled texts can be done using the results of reading tests or Informal Reading Inventories. This can then be confirmed and monitored by having students read a 100-word sample of text and calculating their level of accuracy. Instructional level text is that which a student can read with 90-95% accuracy. This is the level at which students should be reading for teaching purposes (ie. with support). If accuracy is below 90%, the text is said to be at frustration level, and is considered to be too difficult. If accuracy is above 95%, the text is said to be at independent level. This is the level at which students should be reading for recreational purposes (ie. with no support).

### WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY? WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE FOR ITS EFFICACY?

Although there is much information available on how to employ levelling procedures, empirical research supporting their reliability and validity is scarce.

### CONCLUSIONS

Although some preliminary evidence exists, more research examining the reliability and validity of book levelling procedures is needed, but this is a promising procedure.

### THE MUSEC VERDICT: WORTH A TRY

Key references may be found at:  
[www.aces.mq.edu.au/musec\\_co\\_brief.aspx](http://www.aces.mq.edu.au/musec_co_brief.aspx)

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