



Fragile Evidence: A Critique of Reading Assessment

Sharon Murphy, With Patrick Shannon, Peter Johnston, Jane Hansen

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Fragile Evidence--a critique of reading assessment informed by newly emerging conceptualizations of validity and reliability--brings psychometric theory, reading theory, and social critique to bear on reading assessment. Taking its lead from contemporary psychological theory and other fields which ponder the role of evidence and argumentation in making claims about social issues, this text examines the historical and contemporary ways in which such claims have been made for reading assessment. Traditional individualized and standardized tests are critiqued from a variety of perspectives. The assumptions and operational bases of contemporary revisionist assessments (e.g., large-scale performance-based assessments, authentic assessments, etc.) are considered in terms of what they include and what they omit. Collected here in one volume is a systematic analysis of several different reading assessment instruments and conceptualizations of reading assessment, with particular emphasis on the evidence of reading they provide--a type of analysis usually found only in separate articles in journals and edited volumes. This important volume:

- * Offers a *systematic* (rather than generalized) critique of popular standardized norm-referenced group and individualized measures of reading.
- * Looks at the consequential validity of standardized tests.
- * Includes interviews with stakeholders who consider the question of how to describe reading without making reference to standardized tests.
- * Considers how tools such as miscue analysis influence reform.
- * Provides a critical analysis of contemporary reform efforts.

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