APPENDIX G

A Functional Definition of Reading

This definition reflects the rationale and research behind the DIR program for reading, and all of my other reading programs. It sheds light on certain indicators related to the achievement level of reading.

**What is Reading?**

Alexander and Cassandra are playing on the sidewalk, even if it is raining. Alexander is playing with his bike. Cassandra is playing with her red ball. Mohamed is sitting on the sidewalk watching them.

1) A child who cannot sound out the above passage does not know how to read.

2) A child who sounds out the above passage changing more than three words—by replacing them with other words that respect or not the syntax—does not know how to sound out correctly, and will probably not understand precisely what he/she is reading.

3) A child who correctly sounds out, with accuracy, the above passage taking more than one minute and four seconds (1 min. 4 sec.) is not sounding out fluently, and probably does not accurately understand what he/she is reading.

4) A child who sounds out the above passage correctly, taking under a minute and four seconds to do so, with accuracy and fluency, but who does so without respecting segmentation—syntax grouping and punctuation—does not know how to sound out correctly. He/she will probably not accurately understand what he/she is reading.

5) A child who sounds out the above passage correctly, taking

59. Accuracy lower than 90% (29/32)

60. 30 words/minute.
under a minute and four seconds to do so, with accuracy and fluency, respecting the segmentation, but without prosody (emphatic reading) does not read out loud well and does not grasp all the text’s nuances.

6) A child who sounds out the above passage correctly with accuracy, fluency, and segmenting with prosody, but who is unable to answer at least two literal questions during or after reading (e.g. Who has the ball? What is Mohamed doing? What is the girl doing? Where are the children?), read out loud well but does not know what reading really is.

7) A child who correctly sounds out the above passage, and has properly answered the literal questions with accuracy, fluency, segmentation, prosody and retention, but who cannot answer at least one inferential question during or after reading (e.g. How many children are playing on the sidewalk? Are there any clouds in the sky?) reads well and retains literal information, but does not know that reading goes beyond words, and that reading is reasoning. In fact, he/she is not yet an accomplished reader.

Reading is being able to sound out with accuracy, fluency, segmentation while putting emphasis on some elements (prosody), retaining literal information, and making inferences that are derived from literal information. Reading means reacting to the text, reading is reasoning.