

## Cloze Procedure

In a cloze procedure (Taylor, 1953), students read material from which words have been systematically deleted; that is, every *n*th word has been left out. Frequently, every *fifth* word after the first complete sentence is replaced with a blank.... [The] aim is to see how accurately students can predict or infer the words that should fill the blanks, thus creating *closure*, or wholeness, in the passage.

A completely accurate prediction of every deleted word is almost impossible unless the material is extremely simple in content and vocabulary, but it is not necessary to fill in each deletion with total accuracy. If an adequate proportion of words to blanks is supplied, readers can usually employ their sense of what is going on in the passage to supply words that will complete the author's text....

The cloze procedure indicates the extent to which readers are able to follow the sense of a reading passage. In fact, studies have shown that the percentages of correct words readers are able to supply in a cloze passage constitute as reliable a measure of general comprehension as much more elaborate devices (Bormouth, 1966; Jones and Pikulski, 1974; Rankin and Culhane, 1969).

### *Purposes of the Cloze Procedure*

There are three common purposes for using a cloze procedure:

1. to determine whether a particular piece of written text represents an individual's independent, instructional, or frustration reading level (placement purposes)
2. to assess the quality of an individual reader's use of context as a strategy for understanding what is read (diagnostic purposes)
3. to develop a reader's use of syntactic and semantic clues

## Maze Procedure

An alternative to the cloze technique of leaving out words altogether is the use of multiple-choice alternatives. This technique, called the maze, was proposed by Guthrie et al. (1974). The maze is a little easier than the cloze and thus is a good alternative for young students or any readers for whom the blank spaces are intimidating. Easily discouraged students and poor readers usually don't do well on a cloze because there is too much unknown and too many words to be filled in....

In a maze, the teacher provides three alternatives instead of leaving blanks. The choices are (a) the correct word; (b) an incorrect word from the same grammatical class (for example, another noun); and (c) an incorrect word from another grammatical class. The order of the choices should be random so that the correct choice does not always occupy the same position.

...[A] maze is constructed much like a cloze, with the first sentence intact and every fifth word altered. More information is available than in a cloze, however, and correct answers can be circled or underlined. At least twenty items should be used for placement purposes.

Readers with scores of 85 percent or better will find that the material is at their independent level. Scores between 50 and 85 percent indicate the instructional level. For students scoring less than 50 percent correct, the text is too difficult to read (Guthrie et al., 1974).

### Excerpted from:

Gillet, J. W., & Temple, C. (1990). *Understanding reading problems: Assessment and instruction*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown Higher Education.

### References

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