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Text Features And Reading Comprehension

Mary Lee Field

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This booklet illustrates the usefulness of text features as an aid to reading comprehension. Text features such as headings, italics, and lists are used so often that readers tend to ignore the assistance they can provide in reading and understanding a text, especially a non-fiction or academic text. By first examining how we use text features in our native languages, this book raises awareness of an already-familiar part of reading. Building on that awareness, this book helps readers transfer their understanding of text features to reading in a second or foreign language. Using a series of tasks and exercises, the book guides readers to use text features to activate background knowledge, identify main ideas, summarize longer texts, and synthesize information while reading in English as a second/foreign language.

Mary Lee Field, although recently retired from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, continues to be active in the areas of reading theory, methods of teaching reading, and cultural influences on reading processes. She has taught in Greece, the former Yugoslavia, Japan, and China. Most recently, she completed a Senior Fulbright Project in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. She is co-author, with Jo Ann Aebersold, of *From Reader to Reading Teacher* published by Cambridge University Press (1997) and presently being translated to appear in a Japanese edition.

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