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**Language:** English  
**Type of Presentation:** Workshop

**About the Presenter:**

Dr Sue Stothard has over 17 years' experience working in the field of literacy and language skills in children. Sue completed her PhD at the University of York, UK in 1992, the focus of her research being reading comprehension difficulties in children. Since then she has worked on a variety of reading-related projects including: investigating the long-term effects of early language impairments, conducting literacy assessments at Dyslexia Action, UK and working as a Consultant to the Literacy Clinic at Newcastle University, UK.

Sue is currently an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of York, UK. For the last three years she has worked with Professors Maggie Snowling and Charles Hulme, developing the York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension (YARC). The YARC is a new suite of reading assessments for children aged 4-16 years and is published by GL Assessment.

**Title of Paper:** **The Assessment of Reading Comprehension and Decoding Skills in Secondary School Pupils:  
An introduction for career counsellors.**

**Abstract:**

Research indicates that reading difficulties during adolescence have a negative impact on school attainment and future career prospects. For example, Ekstrom et al (1987) reported that reading ability has a significant impact on youth employment. Youths who had completed more years of schooling and had higher levels of reading ability were more likely to be employed and hold jobs of higher complexity compared with youths with less education and/or poorer reading skills. A review by Maughan (1995) also reported that young adults with persisting reading difficulties were more likely to be unemployed or employed in manual occupations, compared with adequate readers. These findings highlight the importance of identifying and supporting adolescents who experience reading difficulties.



The York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension Secondary Test (YARC Secondary) is a new suite of reading assessments developed by researchers at the Centre for Reading and Language, University of York and published by GL Assessment, London. The YARC assessments include Passage Reading, Reading Fluency and Single Word Reading. The tests provide standard scores and age equivalent scores for reading comprehension, summarisation, reading fluency and decoding skill. The YARC Secondary test is designed for use by teachers, psychologists and other professionals and is suitable for students aged 11 to 16 years. It can be used to assess and monitor student progress, identify reading problems, provide diagnostic information or for research purposes. It can also form a useful part of a career counsellor's approach to the assessment of clients with special needs.

This workshop will provide an overview of the YARC Secondary Test. This will include test administration, scoring and interpreting the results. Case studies of students who have completed the YARC will also be reported to illustrate how YARC can be used to identify specific profiles of reading difficulties. Appropriate next steps and programmes for intervention work will also be discussed.

The workshop will conclude with a short session on test development. General guidelines for teachers, career counsellors, guidance staff and youth workers wishing to develop their own non-standardised tests of reading to use within their own schools and communities will also be given.