

Fluency and Comprehension: Knowledge to Practice

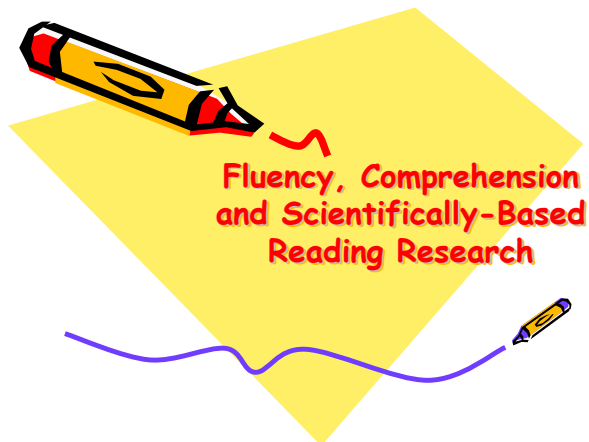
Shari Butler, Ph.D.
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Today's Agenda

- I. Fluency, Comprehension and Scientifically-Based Reading Research
- II. Deepening Our Understanding of Comprehension Instruction
 - A. Elements of Comprehension
 - B. Strategic Reading Instruction
- III. Reflection and Review



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Fluency, Comprehension and Scientifically-Based Reading Research

What skills, knowledge, and attitudes are required for good reading comprehension?



What we know about the factors that affect reading comprehension



Proficient comprehension of text is influenced by:

- Accurate and fluent word reading skills
- Oral language skills (vocabulary, linguistic comprehension)
- Extent of conceptual and factual knowledge
- Knowledge and skill in use of cognitive strategies to improve comprehension or repair it when it breaks down.
- Reasoning and inferential skills

Motivation to understand and interest in task and materials

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The most widely accepted definition of fluency



"Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression"
National Reading Panel

Since we know that prosody is at least partially an index of comprehension...

Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with good comprehension



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However, because it is difficult to measure both prosody and comprehension with a brief test on a large scale,

and because reading rate is strongly correlated with comprehension....

Most states have set their end-of-year targets, or benchmarks for reading fluency in terms of oral reading rate



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Current research in reading development provides support for two ways in which individual differences in reading fluency are causally related to differences among students in reading comprehension

Efficient, or automatic, identification of words allows the reader to focus more attention on the meaning of the passage

Comprehension processes themselves may cause individual differences in reading rate. These comprehension processes influence both fluency and comprehension tasks.



Jenkins, J.R., Fuchs, L.S., van den Broek, P., Espin, C., & Deno, S.L. (2003). Sources of individual differences in reading comprehension and reading fluency. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 719-729.

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How much fluency (rate) is enough to facilitate good reading comprehension?

DIBELS Benchmarks

- 1st Grade - 40 correct words per minute
- 2nd Grade- 90 correct words per minute
- 3rd Grade - 110 correct words per minute

How were these benchmarks established?

They were set empirically at a level that insured a high probability (approx. 80%) of success on measures of reading comprehension



Big ideas that should guide our work to build reading fluency in young children



Students should be encouraged to attend to meaning in all their reading assignments

Encouraging students to read with prosody will lead them to attend to meaning

Encouraging students to check the accuracy of their decoding attempts with unfamiliar words by asking if their initial guess "makes sense" in the context of the sentence will lead them to attend to meaning.

Repeated practice in reading for meaning supports the growth of "automatic comprehension processes" which are important for both fluency and comprehension



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- Read, Read, Read Your Books Each and Every Day!
Fluency, Fluency, Fluency, Fluency
Books can let you dream!



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Definitions of Reading Comprehension



"intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader." Durkin (1993)

"the construction of the meaning of a written text through a reciprocal interchange of ideas between the reader and the message in a particular text." Harris & Hodges, 1995

meaning arises from the active, deliberate thinking processes readers engage in as they read.



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Evidence for instruction in comprehension strategies comes from three sources:

1. Proficient readers monitor their comprehension more actively and effectively than less proficient readers
2. Proficient readers are more likely to use a variety of active cognitive strategies to enhance their comprehension and repair it when it breaks down
3. Explicit instruction along with supported, scaffolded practice in the use of comprehension strategies produces improvements in reading comprehension in both younger and older students



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What Good Readers Do When They Read:

"What they found was that good readers achieve comprehension because they are able to use certain procedures — labeled comprehension strategies by the researchers—to relate ideas in a text to what they already know; to keep track of how well they are understanding what they read; and, when understanding breaks down, to identify what is causing the problem and how to overcome it." (Lehr & Osborne, 2006)



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From the Report of the National Reading Panel:

"The idea behind explicit instruction of text comprehension is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to comprehension when reading." (NRP, 2000, p. 4-39).

"Reading instruction is effective in stimulating student comprehension abilities to the extent that it stimulates students to process texts as good readers do." (Pressley, 2000, p. 545)



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An important cautionary note from a leading comprehension researcher



The most powerful demonstrations of the impact of comprehension strategies instruction have come from studies that have deeply taught a small repertoire of comprehension strategies over time

We should not assume that effective comprehension strategy instruction involves teaching all the strategies on some list (The NRP's or other)



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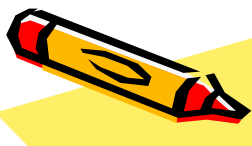
The Big Ideas: Reading Comprehension Strategies



1. Teaching comprehension strategies to students is a way of helping them learn to think more deeply about the meaning of text.
2. We should focus on teaching a small repertoire of strategies, and then provide many opportunities for students to use the strategies while reading interesting text that they want to understand.
3. Providing opportunities for students to have high quality discussions about the meaning of text is an important part of instruction in reading comprehension
4. Increasing opportunities for students to read interesting expository text may be very helpful in preparing them for the demands of understanding more complex text in third grade and after.



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Deepening Our Understanding of Comprehension Instruction Elements of Comprehension Strategic Reading Instruction

- ✓ Elements of Comprehension
- ✓ Strategic Reading Instruction
 - Becoming a strategic reader
 - Becoming an independent reader



ACTIVITY 1

1. What do you know about comprehension instruction?
2. Discuss what you would like to learn about comprehension instruction.
3. As a group construct three questions regarding comprehension instruction.
4. Be prepared to *Share Out*.

ACTIVITY 1: Experiences with Comprehension Instruction

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

**Comprehension
is the reason for reading.**

If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are NOT really reading.



Put Reading First, 2001, p. 48

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What Do Good Readers Do?

1. Good Readers are **PURPOSEFUL**.
2. Good Readers are **ACTIVE**.
3. Good Readers **SCAN THE TEXT** before reading, noting text structures and relevant content.
4. Good Readers are **FLUENT** and are able to focus their mental energy on constructing meaning from text, rather than decoding words.
5. Good Readers are knowledgeable of comprehension **STRATEGIES**.

Durkin (1993); Put Reading First (2001)

What are reading comprehension strategies?

Comprehension strategies are specific procedures children can use to help them:

- 1) become aware of how well they are comprehending text as they read
- 2) improve their understanding and learning from text

- Generating questions
- Using background knowledge to make predictions
- Constructing visual representations
- Summarizing



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Strategic Reading Instruction

Most of the time, mature readers monitor comprehension unconsciously or at least so seamlessly that they are not always aware that they are self-thinking, questioning, and monitoring, which are often referred to as metacognitive strategies.



Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, (2007), p. 102.

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ACTIVITY 2

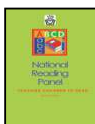
A good way for very experienced readers to check their comprehension strategies is by reading unfamiliar text.

1. Find the handout for Activity 2.
2. Read the passage.
3. Note the strategies you used to assist in comprehending the text.
4. Be prepared to *Share Out*.



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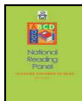
Seven evidence-based instructional practices that improve comprehension:



1. **Comprehension Monitoring:** the reader learns how to become aware or conscious of his or her understanding during reading and learns procedures to fix comprehension problems
2. **Graphic and Semantic Organizers:** enable readers to graphically represent the meanings and relationships of the ideas that underlie the words in the text
3. **Story Structure:** the reader learns to ask and answer who, what, where, when, and why questions about the plot and maps out the time line, characters, and events in stories
4. **Question Answering:** the reader answers questions posed by the teacher and is given corrective feedback

continued on next slide

Seven evidence-based instructional practices that improve comprehension:



5. **Question Generation:** the reader asks himself or herself what, when, where, why, what will happen, how, and who questions
6. **Summarization:** the reader attempts to identify and write the main or most important ideas that integrate or unite the other ideas or meanings of the text into a coherent whole
7. **Multiple-Strategy Teaching:** the reader uses several strategy procedures with guidance from the teacher; multiple strategy teaching is most effective when the procedures are used flexibly and appropriately in naturalistic contexts

(NRP, 2000, 4-6)

1. Comprehension Monitoring

Teachers should systematically and explicitly teach children to:

- Track their thinking
- Notice when they lose focus
- Stop and go back
- Reread to enhance understanding
- Identify what is confusing
- Consciously select a "fix up" strategy to assist in comprehending the text.



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"Fix-Up" Strategies

Teach young readers to be aware of their comprehension and to use "fix-up" strategies when comprehension breaks down.

- Reread the text
- Read ahead
- Slow down the pace of reading
- Read aloud
- Write down important points



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Get the Gist



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2. Graphic and Semantic Organizers

Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and interrelationships among concepts in a text, using diagrams or other pictorial devices.

Graphic organizers are tools that help students comprehend text by:

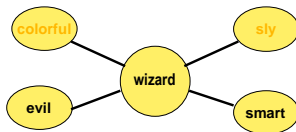
1. Focusing on text structure
2. Enabling students to visually represent concepts and interrelationships of text
3. Providing a format for students to organize their thoughts when responding to text



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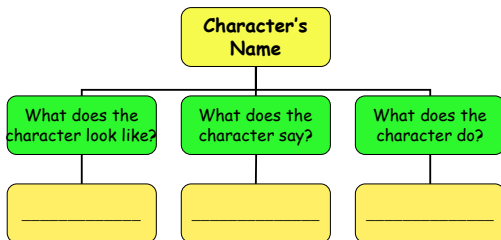
Graphic Organizers for Improving Comprehension

- Guide students' thinking and help them remember the important elements and information in texts
- Involve both questioning and discussion as students collaborate and share ideas





Comprehension - Instructional Tool Character Map



3. Story Structure

What is story structure?

Story structure refers to the way the content and events of a story are organized into a plot.



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Teaching Story Structure

Teach students to identify the categories of content:

1. Setting
2. Characters
3. Initiating Events (Problem)
4. Internal Reactions
5. Goals
6. Problem and Solution
7. Outcomes



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Comprehension - Instructional Tool Story Map

Setting/Main Characters:
The Problem:
↓
Event 1
Event 2
Event 3
The Solution to the Problem
Story Theme:
Summary Statement:

4. Question Answering

Smart questioning is an essential feature of assessing reading comprehension and a tool for extending understanding of what was read. On the other hand, many questions teachers ask can limit responses and critical thinking.

Klingner, Vaughn, & Boardman, (2007), p. 108-109.



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Teacher Questioning:

- Teachers in grades 3 to 6 typically ask about 50 questions in a 30-minute reading lesson. Within the same time frame, students ask fewer than 2 questions.

Susskind, (1979)

- Teachers typically wait less than 2 seconds for a student to respond to a question. The teacher waits even less time for students who are perceived as low achieving.

Stahl, (1994)



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Continuum of Questions and Responses

Ask questions **before**, **during**, and **after** reading



Who? What? When? Where?

Responses

- Recall facts, events, and names
- Focus on information in the text
- Rephrase text that has just been read

How? Why? What if?

Responses

- Move away from what can be seen on the page
- Analyze and elaborate information
- Focus on thinking about what has been read and prior knowledge (making inferences)
- Make connections

5. Question-Answer Relationships (QAR)

- The QAR procedure is based on a three-way relationship among the question, the text, and the reader's prior knowledge.
- The procedure helps students learn to focus on the way that questions are constructed, and so helps them identify and make distinctions among the sources of information they can use to answer questions.
- The procedure follows a gradual release model of instruction, moving from entirely teacher directed to entirely student directed.



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QAR: Question Categories

1. **Right There Questions:** The information that students need to answer the question is readily available in the text.
2. **Think and Search Questions:** The information that students need to answer the question is implied in the text. Students will need to combine what they learned from the text with prior knowledge to form an inference.
3. **On My Own Questions:** The information that students need to answer the question must be drawn entirely from the reader's mind. These questions often begin with: "In your opinion . . ." "Think about something you know . . ." "Based on your experience . . ."
4. **Author and You Questions:** The information that students need to answer these questions is not stated directly in the text. The reader must think about the meaning of the text, formulate ideas and opinions based on what the author wrote. These questions often begin with: "The author implies . . ." "The passage suggests . . ."



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Activity 3: QAR - Let's Try It Together

Directions:

1. Read the selection.
2. Review the QAR Question Categories Sheet.
3. Working with the members of your small group, generate questions for each of the four categories
 - *Right There*
 - *Think & Search*
 - *On My Own*
 - *Author and Me*
4. Be prepared to *Share Out* with the whole group.



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6. Summarization

Summarizing requires students to determine what is important in what they read, to condense the information, and to put it into their own words.

Help students learn to summarize by:

1. Identifying the main ideas
2. Underlining the important points
3. Write successively shorter summaries
4. Look for key words that identify the "Who? What? When? Why? and How?" of the text.



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7. Multiple Strategy Instruction

Skilled reading involves the coordinated use of several cognitive strategies. Readers can learn and flexibly coordinate these strategies to construct meaning from texts.

Help students learn to use multiple strategies when reading:

1. The teacher models and assists in the learning and flexible use of the strategies by the student.
2. Cooperative learning or peer tutoring may be used as a part of multiple-strategies instruction.
3. One variant of multiple-strategy instruction is call "reciprocal teaching."



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Reciprocal Teaching (Multiple-Strategy)

Reciprocal teaching takes place in the context of a dialogue between the teacher and the students - each of whom read text passages and take turns assuming the role of "teacher" in leading this dialogue. (Palincsar, 1986)

- Four main strategies:
 1. Prediction of what might occur later in the text
 2. Clarification of word meanings or confusing text
 3. Generation of questions during reading
 4. Summarization of main ideas of the passage
- Optional additional strategies:
 1. Question answering
 2. Visualizing
 3. Making inferences
 4. Drawing conclusions
 5. Monitoring comprehension
 6. Elaborating



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A General Framework for Comprehension Strategy Instruction



1. **Select the text:** Choose an appropriate piece of text from the students' reading assignment.
2. **Select the strategy:** Determine a strategy that is relevant to the understanding of the text.
3. **Give a clear explanation:** Tell students what the strategy is and why it is useful.
4. **Model the strategy:** Help students learn how, when, and where to use the strategy by demonstrating or thinking aloud about how to use the strategy to better understand the text.



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A General Framework for Comprehension Strategy Instruction



5. **Support student practice:** Work with students to help them figure out how and when to use the strategy themselves. Engage them in discussion about how they are applying the strategy; as necessary, provide corrective feedback.
6. **Apply the strategy:** In subsequent lessons, ask students on their own to apply the strategy to other texts. (Be prepared to do additional modeling and guided practice.)



(Osborn, 2005, p26; Duke & Pearson, 2002, pp. 208-209)

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REMEMBER . . .

Students need to practice comprehension strategies at the listening level before applying them at the reading level.

This occurs through teacher-modeling

Before - During - After Ideas for Interacting with Text

Before	During	After
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect new text with prior knowledge and experiences. 2. Predict what the text is about. 3. Set a purpose for reading. 4. Learn key vocabulary. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form mental images (visualization). 2. Check predictions for accuracy. 3. Self-monitor comprehension. 4. Ask self questions about the text. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss accuracy of predictions 2. Identify the main idea. 3. Summarize key points. 4. Compare and contrast the text with others on the same topic or by the same author.

Comprehension

Examples of Comprehension Processes and Tools

	Before	During	After
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prediction • Visualization • Question Generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension Monitoring • Fix-Up Strategies • Visualization • Cooperative Learning • Clarification • Question Generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarization • Question Answering
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-W-L (informational text) • Response Log • Semantic Maps (prior knowledge) • Story Map • Anticipation Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response Log • Story Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-W-L • Response Log • Semantic Maps (expand knowledge) • Story Map



ACTIVITY 5: Experiences with Comprehension Instruction

What I Know	What I Want to Know	What I Learned
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

Strategic Teaching: Becoming an Independent Reader

Instruction in comprehension strategies is carried out by a classroom teacher who demonstrates, models, or guides the reader in their acquisition and use.

When using comprehension strategies effectively . . . *the reader becomes independent of the teacher.*



(NRP, 2000, p. 4-5)

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Getting the Gist "Adams Family"

- Getting the Gist (snap)
- Getting the Gist (snap)
- Getting the Gist (snap)
- Getting the Gist (snap)
- Getting the Gist (snap)
- Name the who and what and most important thing in 10 words or less and then you get the gist
- Repeat the Chorus



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Comprehension strategies are not ends in themselves; they are means of helping students understand what they are reading.
