



Teaching Children in Mother Tongues: Understanding Written Text

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Presented by

Michael Hunter

Readsters

michael@readsters.com

Objectives

For participants to:

- Understand why comprehension is taught orally to beginning readers
- Read Alouds
 - Know how to plan a scope and sequence for read-alouds while students are learning to decode
 - Understand how to develop purposeful instruction with read-alouds



The Simple View of Reading

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- Important research to inform early reading instruction; a formula:

$$\text{Decoding} \times \text{Language Comprehension} = \text{Reading Comprehension}$$

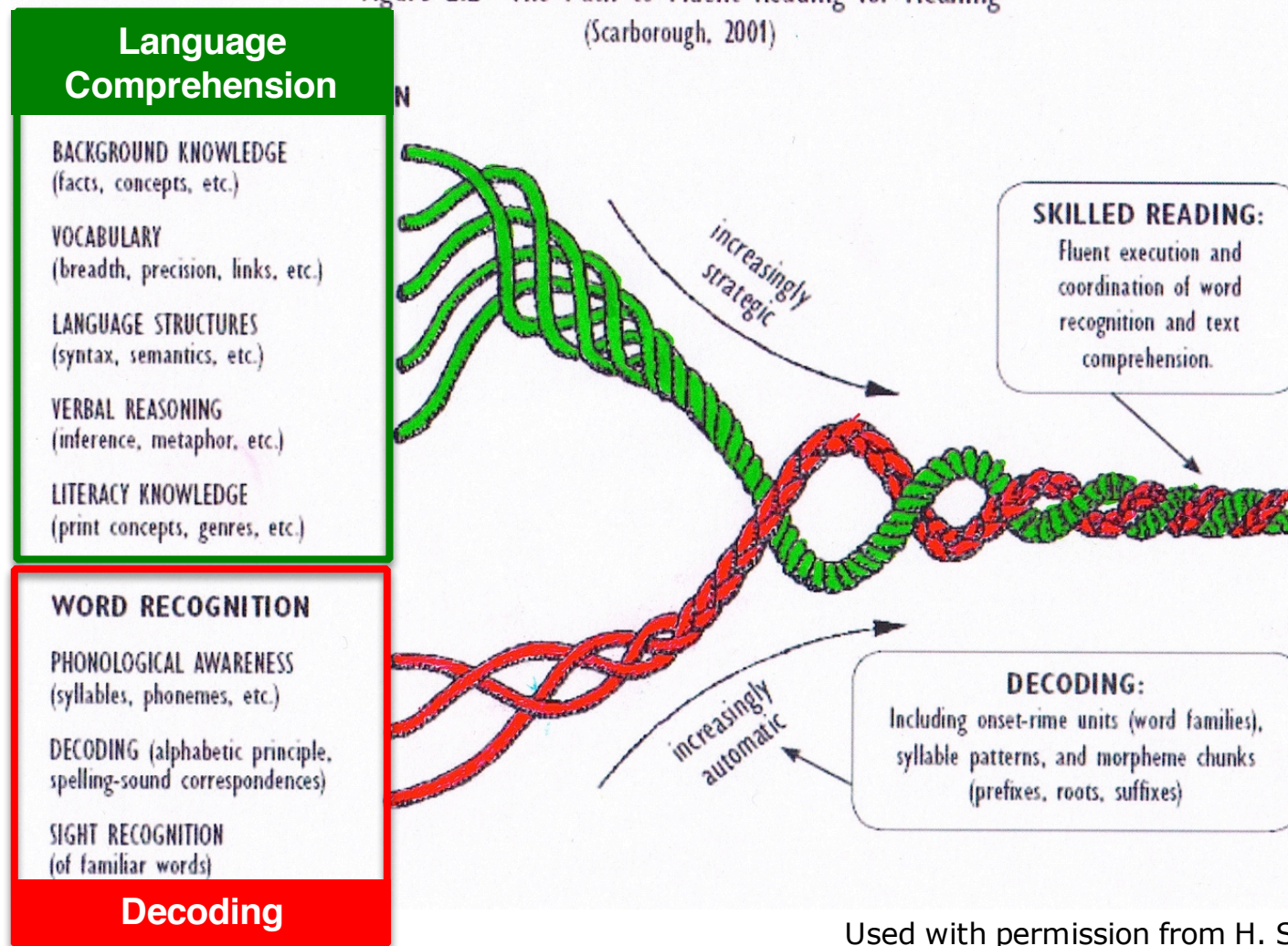
- Decoding is the ability to read familiar and unfamiliar words accurately
- Language comprehension is the ability to understand oral or written language
- Reading comprehension requires both

The Simple View of Reading and Early Reading Instruction

1. Before children know how to decode, language comprehension and listening comprehension are the same thing
2. We need to *teach* beginning readers to:
 - decode - read words and sentences accurately
 - AND
 - understand - know what the words and sentences mean

Teach Decoding and Listening Comprehension **Separately** until Children Learn to Decode

Figure 2.2 The Path to Fluent Reading for Meaning
(Scarborough, 2001)



Used with permission from H. Scarborough

How to Teach Decoding and Listening Comprehension Separately

Until students can decode familiar and unfamiliar words accurately:

- Decoding instruction should be with 100% decodable materials
 - Questions asked after students read decodable materials are simple and just to remind students we read for meaning
- Comprehension should be taught through oral activities with more complex text that challenges them to think and learn

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Read Alouds

Read-Alouds: An Effective Way to Teach Listening Comprehension

- Read-alouds are texts that teachers read *to* students
 - Students do not read the texts
 - Students do not need copies of the texts
- As students are learning to decode in one part of the lesson, read-alouds are used for listening comprehension instruction in another part of the lesson

Challenges for Using Read-Alouds

1. Identify topics to address
2. Finding appropriate materials
3. Developing interactive questions
4. Having everyone understand that students do *not* read the texts
5. Teacher's comfort with reading aloud in the mother tongue



Challenge 1

Identifying topics to address

How to Plan a Scope and Sequence for Read-Alouds

- Include both informational texts and stories to expose students to the elements and structures of both genres
- Determine appropriate subjects for informational texts and story elements to be taught
 - Align themes with national curriculum as much as possible
- Texts should have vocabulary and sentence structure slightly above the children's existing language level
 - Texts should not be only about what children already know

Identifying Subject Matter

- Determine themes for informational texts and for some stories
 - For example: “animals”, “jobs”, “the sky”, “weather”, “the market”
- Determine structural elements for stories
 - For example: “characters”, “setting”, “what happened first, next, and last”, “problem and resolution”



Challenge 2

Finding appropriate materials

Finding Texts

- Review existing texts in the language of instruction and determine if they are appropriate for instruction both in topic and complexity
 - Can the text be adapted for complexity?
- Write texts if not enough existing texts can be found for identified subject matter
 - These can be new texts or translations of existing texts

Selecting Texts

- The primary goals of read-alouds are for students to:
 1. Listen to more formal language than they speak
 - Written text is always more formal and complex than spoken language
 2. Understand story structure
 3. Build vocabulary and knowledge base
 4. Learn life lessons
- If a text cannot be used to teach at least two of the above, it should not be selected
 - We need to make the most of limited instructional time

Pictures

- Pictures can add to read-alouds, but are not necessary
 - Children and adults have been enraptured by stories without pictures for thousands of years
- Use pictures for a purpose
 - A picture of an ocean or river can help students in dry areas understand the meaning
 - A picture of something thick and thin can help children understand the meaning and comparison
- Color pictures are expensive, and most of the time black and white pictures are just as effective



Challenge 3

Developing interactive questions

Well Designed Questions Keep Students Engaged

- Provide instructional scripts for teachers to use, with questions specific to each text
- The scripts will include:
 - Vocabulary words to teach before reading and to review after reading
 - What to tell students about the text before they hear it
 - Questions to ask before, during, and after reading the text

Examples of Before, During, and After Questions

Story about a Shepherd	Informational about the Moon
<p><u>Before</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– What does a shepherd do? <p><u>During</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Why did the shepherd hesitate before leaving? <p><u>After</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– What happened first, next, last in the story?– Why did the shepherd cry at the end of the story?	<p><u>Before</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– What do you see in the sky at night? <p><u>During</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Why don't we see the moon at night when the sky is cloudy? <p><u>After</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– What makes the moon shine?– What is one new thing you learned?



Challenge 4

Having everyone understand that only the teacher, not students, reads the text

Only the Teacher Reads the Story

For many teachers, reading a text TO children, NOT WITH them, is a new concept and difficult to understand

- Make it clear during teacher training that the teacher reads the text and the children listen
- Demonstrate and practice a read-aloud during teacher training
- Include clear directions in the teacher guide about how to conduct each read-aloud



Challenge 5

Teachers' discomfort with
reading aloud in the mother
tongue

Teachers' Discomfort with Reading Aloud in Mother Tongue

- Almost all teachers are uncomfortable reading aloud in mother tongue
 - Because of a lack of reading materials in mother tongue, not many teachers have much experience reading aloud
- Assure pedagogical advisors and teachers that the teachers will become proficient as they practice reading
- Include substantial time during training for teachers to practice reading aloud with one another

Summary

- Comprehension is taught orally, not through reading, as children are learning to decode
- Use read-aloud texts that are slightly higher level than children's existing language level
- Plan a scope and sequence of themes with new information you want children to learn—tied to national curriculum if possible
- Script purposeful questions for before, during, and after read-alouds
- Provide ample practice during training for teachers to practice reading in the mother tongue

References

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Thank you

To request these slides,
email
michel@readsters.com

