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Session 2:
Word Recognition

Teacher Professional Development Series

Louisiana LITERACY

READING REVIVAL

Recap

In our last session, we spent time...

- defining the science of reading.
- discussing the dual strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope.
- discussing what skilled reading looks and sounds like.
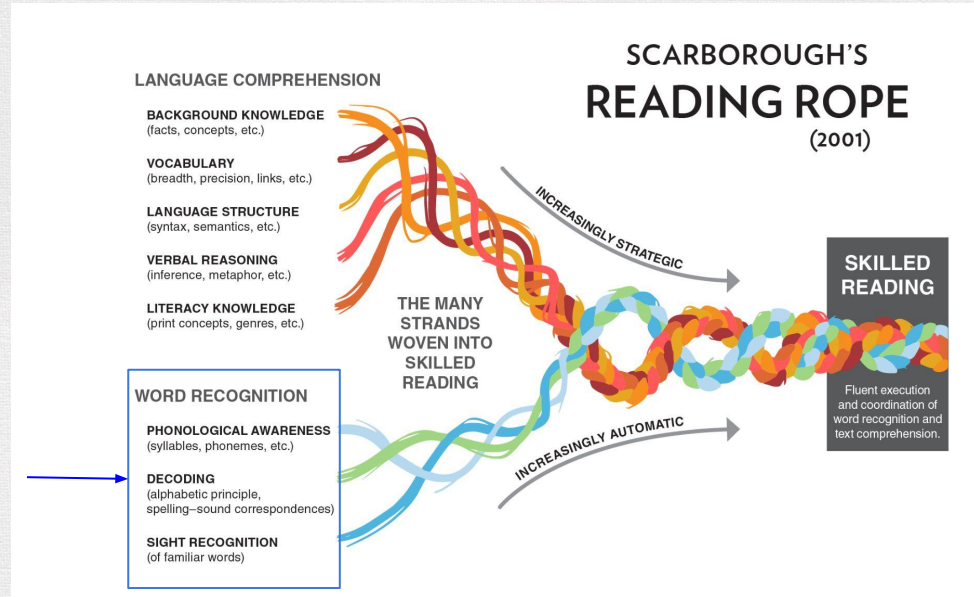
Today's Objective

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

★ explain the role of *word recognition* in the science of reading.

★ explain how *phonological awareness, decoding,* and *sight recognition* shape a students' ability to read with automaticity.

Word Recognition

- Word recognition involves *phonological awareness, decoding,* and *sight recognition.*
- These skills are woven over time so that word recognition becomes automatic.
- **Automatic** word recognition is necessary for students to be fluent readers.

SOURCE: Heggerty

SCARBOROUGH'S **READING ROPE** (2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle, spelling–sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

THE MANY STRANDS WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC

SKILLED READING

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.
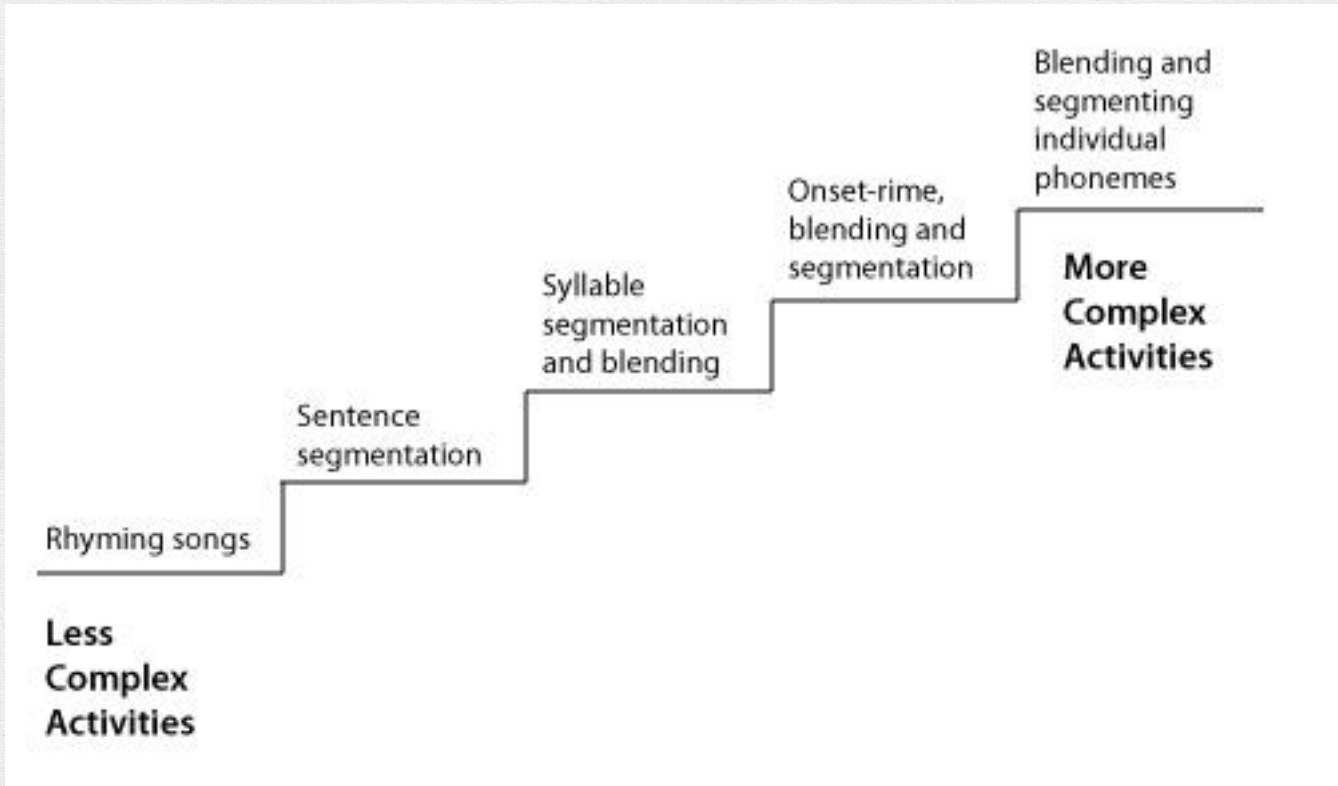
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Phonological Awareness

- *Phonological awareness* includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language – parts such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes.

- This work can be done in the dark!! (Words/letters not displayed.)

- Four main levels: word, syllable, onset/rime, phoneme

- Examples: Clapping out syllables, identifying onsets and rimes, identifying rhyming words

Phonemic Awareness

- Phonemic awareness refers to the specific ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.

- This work can also be done in the dark (words/letters not displayed).

- Examples: Orally blending/segmenting sounds in words, tapping and sweeping the sounds heard in words, phoneme substitution/deletion activities

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Blending and
segmenting
individual
phonemes

Onset-rime,
blending and
segmentation

**More
Complex
Activities**

Syllable
segmentation
and blending

Sentence
segmentation

Rhyming songs

**Less
Complex
Activities**

SOURCE: Reading Rockets

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Assessing Phonological/Phonemic Awareness

Most curricula have Phonological/Phonemic Awareness assessments, but if yours doesn't or if you want to know more, it's not hard to measure this on your own:

- Can the student identify the number of words in a spoken sentence?
- Can the student generate rhyming words?
- Can the student identify syllables and blend syllables in words?
- Can the student identify and blend onsets/rimes in words?
- Can a student identify and blend phonemes in words? (You may want to gradually increase the number of phonemes - start with two or three, then gradually increase the number).

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Phonics/Decoding

- Phonics is the process of teaching students the principles of letter-sound relationships, how to sound out printed words, and exceptions to the principles.

- Phonics is when you add the printed letters and words - you **cannot** do this work in the dark!

- Phonics should be taught systematically and explicitly.

  - Predictable, common letter/sound correspondences should be taught before less common or complex correspondences.

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Phonics/Decoding

- Teach **pattern recognition**, not rule memorization.

  - Most individuals learn to decode words in print because they accumulate explicit and tacit knowledge of linguistic patterns—phonological, orthographic, and morphological (Moats, 1998).

Phonics/Decoding

- How do I do this in the classroom?

    - <u>Word sorts with conversation</u> - In a small group, have students sort words with similar patterns and ask them to explain why they are putting those words together.

    - Analyze words with students and have them "discover" patterns. Then introduce more words with those patterns, and have students read them.

    - Writing words after reading them reinforces pattern knowledge.

Assessing Phonics/Decoding Knowledge

- Word reading assessments that include words with the particular letter-sound correspondences that have been explicitly taught can be a great way to diagnose gaps in code knowledge.

- Analyzing records of student reading.

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Assessing Phonics Knowledge

The Red Rose

Focus Sound: e at the end

Jake got a pot. "I will set it in the sun," said Jake. In time, a stem came up from the mud. It was the size of a pod.

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Phonics/Decoding

- Decoding is the ability to apply your knowledge of letter-sound relationships, including knowledge of letter patterns, to correctly pronounce written words.

- As students become more proficient in their knowledge of the sound/spellings they have been taught, they will be able to use that knowledge to decode words in text.

- Decoding is an important step in their progression to sight recognition!

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Assessing Decoding

- When listening to a student read, can they accurately pair the sounds with the spellings and blend sounds together to read the words?

- Is their decoding laborious or automatic?

- If the decoding is laborious, the student may require additional support with phonological/phonemic awareness, or they may not have sufficient knowledge of the code.

- As students' ability to decode becomes more automatic (typically around mid-first grade, you can begin to compare their reading to established fluency norms).

Sight Recognition

- Sight recognition is the ultimate goal of our work with the strands focused on word recognition.

  - Fluent readers can automatically recognize a large number of words - this is known as their "sight vocabulary."

  - Adult readers have between 30,000 and 60,000 words that they can recognize by sight.

Sight Recognition

- Through the process of orthographic mapping, students use the oral language processing part of their brain to map (connect) the sounds of words they already know (the phonemes) to the letters in a word (the spellings).

- They then permanently store the connected sounds and letters of words (along with their meaning) as instantly recognizable words, described as "sight vocabulary" or "sight words".

SOURCE: Sedita, Joan. 2020. "The Role of Orthographic Mapping in Learning to Read."

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Sight Recognition

- Words learned through the letter-sound instruction lead to neural activity on the left side of the brain, which encompasses visual and language regions. In contrast, words learned via whole-word association showed activity more focused toward right hemisphere processing.

- Left hemisphere activity during early word recognition is strongly associated with skilled readers, and is often missing in children and adults who struggle with reading.

SOURCE: Yoncheva, Wise, and McCandliss (2015)

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Final Thoughts

- Phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition each play an important role in developing a students' ability to recognize words quickly and efficiently.

- Teach speech to print, not print to speech!

- Phonics must be taught systematically and explicitly!

- Most students who struggle with reading in the early years struggle with word recognition.

- Teachers must have a deep understanding of the code so that they can support students.

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