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Session 2:
Writing and Word Recognition

Teacher Professional Development Series:
K-3 Writing

Louisiana LITERACY

READING REVIVAL

Presenter Introduction

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Today's Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will understand how the "word recognition" strands of Scarborough's Reading Rope inform high-quality writing instruction in grades K-3.

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What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- Writing is a complex process that requires students to manage many factors simultaneously - word choice, spelling, syntax, background information, and content knowledge.

- For students who are not yet at a point of encoding with sufficient automaticity (even if the encoding is inventive), or those with limited oral language skills, work with writing can (and should) begin orally, and should focus on responding to text - either by sharing ideas or responding to questions.

SOURCE: The Writing Revolution

Writing and the Science of Reading

- Research indicates a strong relationship between spelling and writing: "Writers who must think too hard about how to spell use up valuable cognitive resources needed for higher level aspects of composition."

- "Even more than reading, writing is a mental juggling act that depends on automatic deployment of basic skills such as handwriting, spelling, grammar, and punctuation so that the writer can keep track of such concerns as topic, organization, word choice, and audience needs."

- Poor spellers may only write what they feel comfortable spelling; they may easily lose track of their thoughts as they focus on spelling words with legible handwriting.

Source: Moats

SCARBOROUGH'S
READING ROPE
(2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
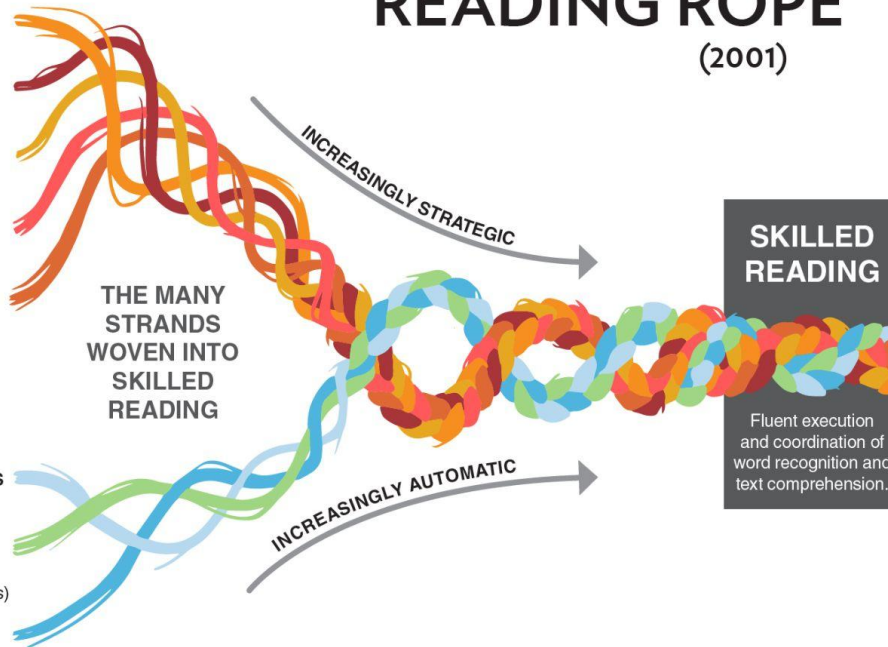(syntax, semantics, etc.)

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)

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC

THE MANY STRANDS WOVEN INTO SKILLED READING

SKILLED READING

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- In grades K-3, the focus of writing instruction - like reading instruction - should be on two key areas:

  - building students' capacity to encode with automaticity;

  - building their capacity to develop and articulate complex thoughts about diverse topics that they can communicate through writing once their encoding skills "catch up"

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What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- Building students' ability to encode with automaticity goes hand-in-hand with systematic, explicit phonics instruction.

- As students become proficient in their knowledge and application of "the code," they will be able to apply this knowledge to writing.

- As they are learning different phoneme/grapheme correspondences, they should be given opportunities to practice writing words, phrases, and/or short sentences that include these correspondences.

What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- As you introduce sound spellings to students, provide them with opportunities to practice writing those sound spellings during the same lesson.

- Dehaene (2014) shows that the process of forming letters through writing activates neural circuits in the brain that promote automatic recognition while reading; *writing letters ultimately improves reading fluency*.

What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- Phonics instruction is incomplete if it does not provide opportunities for students to practicing writing the sounds, and using their knowledge of those sounds to form words.

- At the earliest grade levels, they do not have sufficient code knowledge to communicate their ideas meaningfully in writing; as their code knowledge grows, they are able to apply what they know to communicate ideas.

- Inventive spelling is *encouraged.* Students should use their knowledge of spelling patterns to communicate ideas.

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What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- Feedback should affirm their application of sounds, but may also acknowledge incorrect spelling:

  - "Wow, you used your knowledge of sounds to spell this word just like you heard it! Great job! But I am going to let you know that the correct spelling for this words is ***. You didn't know that yet, and that's ok. What you did is exactly what I wanted you to do! You used what you know to spell this word!"

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How Do You Know if Students are Applying Their Knowledge of Sounds in Writing?

- Spelling tests

- Dictation exercises

- Analysis of writing patterns in response to short prompts/exit tickets/free writing activities

Writing - Don't Rush the Process!

- Do not rush students to write essays independently when their knowledge and ability to apply the code is not sufficiently developed. This is unproductive, and will create frustration.

- Students need daily opportunities to practice applying their code knowledge in writing using tasks that do not require the cognitive demands that more traditional essay-writing requires.

- Short-answer responses that are embedded in the context of reading instruction can be a great bridge to essay writing for students. This is also a great opportunity for you to provide feedback on both strands of writing in an appropriately scaffolded and supported way.

Writing - Don't Rush the Process

- As students become increasingly automatic in their ability to write words, you can begin the process of teaching them to draft essays using the "plan, organize, write, revise, edit" model.

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How do leaders support this work?

- Create school-wide systems that support a shared writing vision and shared writing strategies.

- Schedules that include time to explicitly teach writing embedded in the content of the curriculum.

- Provide professional development opportunities on writing for *all* teachers.

- Ensure that explicit phonics and foundations instruction are a part of the literacy/writing instruction.

- Develop school/system wide strategies for writing instruction.

- Cultivate a writing culture that views writing as an avenue to support and improve student reading across all content areas.

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Questions or Suggestions?

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