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## Session 3: Best Practices in Comprehension and Fluency

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# Mission

Louisiana students will have improved literacy outcomes through high-quality instruction and interactions by an effective teacher who is supported by leaders and families.



**LITERACY  
GOALS**



**EXPLICIT  
INSTRUCTION,  
INTERVENTIONS,  
AND EXTENSIONS**



**ONGOING  
PROFESSIONAL  
GROWTH**



**FAMILY  
LITERACY  
ENGAGEMENT**

# Active Implementation Formula



**Improved Student Outcomes**



# Outcomes

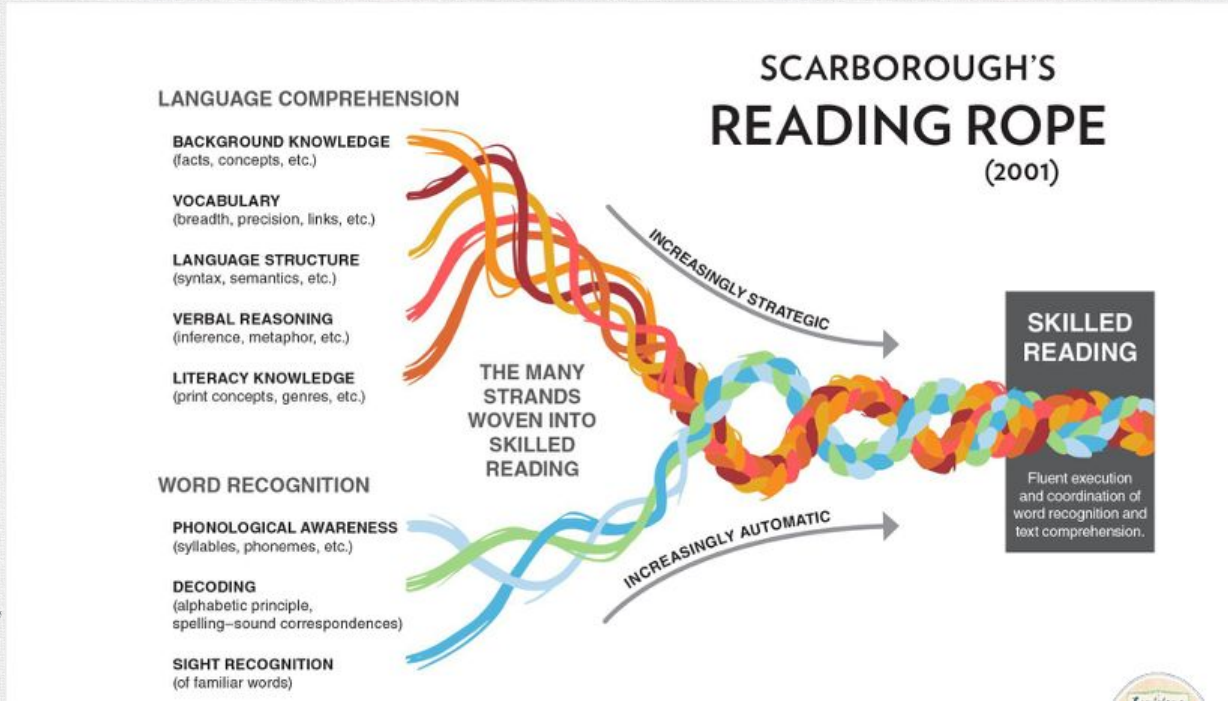
- Participants will be able to:
  - identify the components of comprehension and fluency.
  - understand how to develop proficiency of the components of comprehension and fluency through core instruction.

# The Why

- Students who are below reading level are struggling to comprehend some of the text they are reading.
- Teachers need ways to improve fluency and comprehension through both whole-class, core instruction, as well as small-group instruction.



# The Components of Comprehension



Receive New Learning

Believes



**Fluency**

# Reading Fluency

- The National Reading Panel (2000) defines reading fluency as the ability to read text with the appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody (components of fluency).
- Reading fluency depends on well-developed word-recognition skills that are acquired through systematic, explicit instruction in phonemic/phonological awareness and phonics. Strong language comprehension skills also support reading fluency.
- As a student's decoding automaticity increases, reading fluency increases.





# Fluency Improves Proficiency in All Content Areas



- Fluency is said to be the bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson, 2004). Slow and laborious reading is frustrating for secondary students and often leads them to avoid reading altogether (Rasinski et al., 2005).
- There is a correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension, so in addition to instruction in comprehension strategies, teaching students to read fluently may help them better understand what they read (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, & Jenkins, 2001). If students spend most of their effort focused on word recognition or reading one word at a time without phrasing, their ability to comprehend text is compromised.

Source: [The Reading Teacher's Sourcebook](#)

# Purpose of a Fluency Screener

- Assessing a student's fluency allows the teacher to see the accuracy and rate a student possesses when reading text. This refers to how many words correct the student is reading and how fast or slow. We want students to read at the appropriate rate of speech, which is fast enough to gather meaning, but not too fast because meaning may be missed then as well.
- When screening, teachers can determine if students are missing certain words and detect certain patterns.
- The fluency screener tells teachers if the student is:
  - fluent.
  - not 100% fluent, but not below the 50th percentile, and needs more fluency practice.
  - below the 50th percentile for that grade level and gaps exist in the student's code knowledge or word recognition skills.

## Next Steps

- Students above the 50th percentile would benefit from fluency practice. See the next slide for guidance.
- Students below the 50th percentile would benefit from further screening.



# ORF Screener in Action



Believes

# Further Developing Fluency

- Most of the ELA curricula have fluency passages that can be used for further practice that also relate to the topic(s) covered in that unit of study.
  - The Assessment and Remediation Guide from CKLA has fluency passages that align with each unit.
  - [Guidebooks Curriculum Hub](#) has fluency passages available. They can be found by clicking on the grade level, the desired unit, 01 Unit (once in the Google Drive folder), then Fluency Tasks.
- Achieve the Core has a thorough process to follow for more fluency practice, as well as a library of fluency passages sorted by genre. Resources can be found for the following grade bands:
  - [2-3](#)
  - [4-5](#)
  - [6-8](#) (Can definitely be used for high school as well.)
- Additional high school fluency support and passages can be found at the [Ohio Literacy Alliance](#) as well.

# Fluency Practice in Small Groups

- Fluency practice should include:
  - walking students through previewing the text.
  - modeling how the text should be read with the appropriate rate and prosody.
  - where necessary, explaining prosody (i.e. *I paused at this comma because...*).
  - moving through a progression of scaffolds after modeling, such as echo reading and choral reading before asking students to independently read.
  - conducting 3-4 reads of a passage to ensure students are building their sight word recognition.
    - each read-through should have a different purpose. Purposes could include:
      - reading at an appropriate pace with expression
      - answering questions
      - identifying words they do not know
      - reflecting on what students learned from the text

# Fluency Practice in Small Groups Continued

- providing **frequent corrective feedback** to students as they are reading, helping to pronounce incorrect words.
- moving to timed reading eventually so that students can increase their words read per minute.
- asking “check for understanding” questions as students progress through the readings.
- asking students to track their progress as they read that passage throughout the week.

# Develop Fluency in Whole Group: Partner Reading

- ★ Partner read “[The Treasure of Lemon Brown](#)” by Walter Dean Myers
- ★ Purpose for reading: Analyze Greg’s perception of his father and Lemon Brown by making evidence-based inferences.



# Let's Talk About What Happened

- ★ What were some teacher moves?
- ★ What were some student moves?
- ★ How will this practice, done this way, affect student outcomes?

# Student Experience: Partner Reading

1. Communicate the purpose
2. Pair students with mixed ability, but same native language
3. Model with another student what it should look and sound like
4. Identify the purpose for reading that day
5. Monitor reading
6. Debrief what was read

\*\*Access Content Literacy Support -[Partner Reading](#) in the Literacy Library to view full document and steps

# Progress Monitoring of Fluency

- Student progress should be monitored to determine how they are progressing in their fluency.
- Some programs offer progress monitoring platforms, but it is as easy as [graphing](#) students' words correct per minute (WCPM).
- When students graph their progress themselves and are a part of the goal-setting process it greatly impacts their motivation to improve their fluency.

# Comprehension



# Reading Comprehension

- Text comprehension is a dynamic and interactive process involving several sources of information and knowledge.
- “Successful comprehension of written text enables the reader to acquire and apply new knowledge, to experience other (fictional) worlds, to communicate successfully, and to attain academic success.”

*Source: Cain, 2007*



# Characteristics of Strong Reading Comprehenders



- Good comprehenders are able to:
  - integrate knowledge and make inferences.
  - monitor their own comprehension.
  - identify prior knowledge and use of text structure.
  - remember sequence of events and essential information.

SOURCE: Cain, 2007

# Consequences of Weak Comprehension

- lifelong difficulties with reading
- lack of motivation for leisurely reading
- less practice in word reading and comprehension, fewer opportunities to acquire new vocabulary and knowledge
- may impair the ability to learn more generally
- generally lower scores

SOURCE: Cain, 2009



# Spotting a Weak Comprehender

- students may read fluently and accurately
- struggle to answer questions based on the text, especially questions that are beyond basic recall
- produce poorly structured written and oral narratives



SOURCE: Cain, 2009



# Background Knowledge

- Studies have consistently shown that students with a greater amount of background knowledge tend to be stronger at reading comprehension than those with more limited background knowledge.
- Building a broad base of knowledge with your students is a crucial component of good reading instruction.
- As you build their knowledge base, they are able to think, speak about, and write about many different topics.
- Many of our widely used curricula have a focus on building a wide knowledge base among students.
- SOURCE: [Snow, Serry, and Hammond, 2021](#)

# Vocabulary

- Vocabulary is essential to reading and comprehending.
- The average student learns 3,000-4,000 new words a year and the majority of that is learned indirectly. Some vocabulary needs to be explicitly taught, however.
- Vocabulary is also acquired through conversations, read-alouds, and independent reading.
- There are multiple opportunities to build Tier 2 vocabulary for students to interact on a deeper level within the secondary grades.

# Language Structure

- Good language comprehension also requires an awareness of and skill with syntax - the rules that determine how sentences are structured.
- *Syntactic awareness* refers to the ability to monitor the relationships among the words in a sentence in order to understand while reading or composing orally or in writing.
- Poor syntactic awareness will also negatively impact reading comprehension - this is often a particularly challenging area for English language learners whose home language may have different syntactic patterns.
- Text structures are also key to extracting and processing information

Source: Joan Sedita - Keys to Literacy

# Verbal Reasoning

- *Verbal reasoning* refers to understanding what you read by
  - making connections to what you already know
  - inferencing
  - understanding metaphors
  - being able to draw conclusions from text.
- Verbal reasoning is a dominant component in secondary text and curriculum.
- Verbal reasoning tests are often part of applying for a job and entrance exams to get into colleges.

# Literacy Knowledge

- Literacy knowledge consists of
  - print concepts such as the message being delivered in the text (menu vs. book)
  - directionality of print
  - distinction between words, phrases, and sentences.
- Literacy knowledge also consists of different genres of writing and the author's purpose.

# Building Strong Comprehenders

- There is no one “magical” strategy, but there are ways to help build comprehension skills in students.
- Summarizing what has been read.
- Generating questions to monitor comprehension (done by students).
- Using context clues to make inferences.
- Combining lexical inference and question generation.
- Offering several opportunities to communicate to build background knowledge or oral comprehension.



SOURCE: Cain, 2009

# 8 Types of Instruction that Improve Comprehension

1. Comprehension monitoring in which the reader learns how to be aware or conscious of his or her understanding during reading and learns procedures to deal with problems in understanding as they arise.
2. Cooperative learning in which readers work together to learn strategies in the context of reading.
3. Graphic and semantic organizers that allow the reader to represent graphically (write or draw) the meanings and relationships of the ideas that underlie the words in the text.
4. Story structure from which the reader learns to ask and answer who, what, where, when, and why questions about the plot and, in some cases, maps out the timeline, characters, and events in stories.
5. Question answering in which the reader answers questions posed by the teacher and is given feedback on the correctness.
6. Question generation in which the reader asks himself or herself what, when, where, why, what will happen, how, and who questions.
7. Summarization in which 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.
8. Multiple-strategy teaching in which the reader uses several of the procedures in interaction with the teacher over the text. Multiple-strategy teaching is effective when the procedures are used flexibly and appropriately by the reader or the teacher in naturalistic contexts. [-National Reading Panel: Comprehension](#)

# Reading Comprehension Instruction

- There are several things that can be done as a whole class through the curriculum.
  - [summarizing](#)
  - [close read strategy](#) (build questions in the margins to guide)
  - building knowledge of context clues
  - discussion techniques
- Students who need additional support may need small group instruction on these strategies. Instruction should be
  - direct
  - explicit



# Putting Fluency and Comprehension into Practice

- What is one way you are going to incorporate both fluency and comprehension into your daily instruction?



**Internalize  
& Practice**

# Support for Coaches Through This Process

- **Communities of Practice(COPs)** for next school year will start around this work.
- **COPs** will be held every third Thursday of the month. Dates listed to the right.
- **COPs** will provide coaches with various **research, resources and strategies** to support teachers with best practices in comprehension and fluency through **professional** and **collaborative** learning structures.

Aug 17, 2023  
Sep 21, 2023  
Oct 19, 2023  
Nov 16, 2023  
Dec 21, 2023  
Jan 18, 2024  
Feb 15, 2024  
Mar 21, 2024  
Apr 18, 2024  
May 16, 2024

# Coaching Layers of support

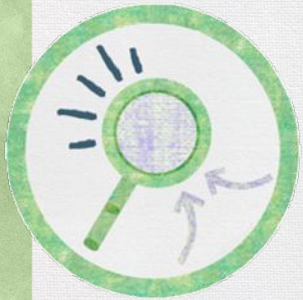
- 1) Individual Planning/Coaching
- 2) Collaborative Planning/Coaching
- 3) Professional Learning Communities
- 4) Professional Development and Workshops
- 5) Assessment & Data Support
- 6) Schoolwide Initiatives
- 7) Research & Resources Support

## Next Steps



### Implement Learning

- What materials do you still need to implement fluency and comprehension practice?
- What topics or activities could come through Teacher Collaboration to assist with building knowledge around both of these topics?



### Assess Impact

- What data will be collected to determine the impact of fluency and comprehension best practices?

# Resources

For more resources on comprehension:

- [Middle and High School PD Series](#)
- [Content Literacy Support Resources](#) and [3-12 Literacy Support PD Series](#)
- Keys to Literacy: Free Resources: [Comprehension](#)



# Questions/Comments

Contact us if you have any questions or comments at [louisianaliteracy@la.gov](mailto:louisianaliteracy@la.gov).

