

## Sourcebook



SEE ALSO . . .

Section III: Early Literacy

Chapter 3: Print Awareness

Chapter 4: Letter Knowledge

Chapter 5: Phonemic Awareness

## Essential Components of Reading Instruction

Charged with conducting a rigorous and comprehensive review of reading research, the National Reading Panel (2000) produced a report for Congress focused on five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition to these components, the Sourcebook covers instruction in print awareness, letter knowledge, irregular words, and multisyllabic words.

7

### Print Awareness

Print awareness is knowing about the forms and the functions of print; it is a child's earliest introduction to literacy (Gunn, Simmons, and Kame'enui 1998). Awareness of the forms of print includes knowledge about the conventions of print—conventions that govern the physical structure of written language and text organization. Students with print awareness know how to handle a book, where on a page to begin reading, and the difference between a letter and a word. Awareness of the functions of print includes knowing that print is a communication device.

### Letter Knowledge

Letters are the components of written words. They represent sounds systematically in the spelling of words. Learning letters requires becoming familiar with 26 uppercase and 26 lowercase letter shapes and associating these letter shapes to their letter names. Handwriting practice helps young students to learn and recall letter shapes (Ehri and Roberts 2006; Berninger 1999).

### Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to detect, identify, and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. It is one component of phonological awareness. Phonological awareness is an umbrella term that includes the awareness of the larger parts of spoken language, such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes—as well as the smaller parts, phonemes. A phoneme is the smallest unit of spoken language that makes a difference in a word's





Section III: Decoding and Word Study

Chapter 6: Phonics

Chapter 7: Irregular Word Reading

Chapter 8: Multisyllabic Word Reading

meaning. For example, the phonemes /s/ and /f/ are different; the meaning of the word *sat* is different from the meaning of the word *fat*. According to the National Reading Panel (2000), phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when students are taught to use letters as they manipulate phonemes.

### Phonics

Phonics is a method of instruction that teaches students the systematic relationship between the letters and letter combinations (graphemes) in written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken language and how to use these relationships to read and spell words. Phonics instruction—which is intended for beginning readers in the primary grades and for older students who are struggling to read—can help students learn how to convert the printed word into its spoken form (National Reading Panel 2000). This process, called decoding, involves looking at a word and connecting the letters and sounds and then blending those sounds together. Phonics instruction also helps students to understand the alphabetic principle—written letters represent spoken sounds. In other words, letters and sounds work together in systematic ways to allow spoken language to be written down and written language to be read.

### Irregular Word Reading

Not all words are regular or can be read by sounding them out. An irregular word contains one or more sound/spelling correspondences that a student does not know and therefore cannot use to decode the word. Within a reading program, there are basically two types of irregular words: words that are permanently irregular and words that are temporarily irregular (Carnine et al. 2006). Some of the most common words in English are irregular. These high-frequency words appear often in printed text and therefore are crucial for comprehension.



### Multisyllabic Word Reading

While phonics instruction gives students the basic tools to decode most single-syllable words, explicit instruction in recognizing syllables and morphemes gives students additional strategies for reading longer multisyllabic words. To read words in text fluently and accurately, the brain's orthographic processor must learn to "see" common letter patterns and recurring word parts (Moats 2005). In multisyllabic words, these multi-letter patterns, or "chunks," may be syllables, affixes, or phonograms (Ehri 2002).

### Fluency

According to Hudson, Lane, and Pullen (2005), reading fluency is made up of at least three key elements: "*accurate* reading of connected text at a conversational *rate* with appropriate *prosody* or expression." Each of these elements—accuracy, rate, and prosody—has a clear connection to reading comprehension. Differences in reading fluency distinguish good readers from poor; a lack of reading fluency is a good predictor of reading comprehension problems (Stanovich 1991). Teachers can think of reading fluency as a bridge between the two major components of reading—decoding and comprehension.

### Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. It occupies an important position both in learning to read and in comprehending text (National Reading Panel 2000). According to Michael Graves (2000), there are four components of an effective vocabulary program: (1) wide or extensive independent reading to expand word knowledge, (2) instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words, (3) instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and (4) word consciousness and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning. Not surprisingly, vocabulary development is especially important for English-language learners (ELLs).



#### SEE ALSO . . .

Section IV: Reading Fluency

Chapter 9: Fluency Assessment

Chapter 10: Fluency Instruction



#### SEE ALSO . . .

Section V: Vocabulary

Chapter 11: Specific Word Instruction

Chapter 12: Word-Learning Strategies

Chapter 13: Word Consciousness





SEE ALSO . . .

Section VI: Comprehension

Chapter 14: Narrative Reading

Chapter 15: Informational Reading

10



SEE ALSO . . .

Comprehensive Reading Model, p. 743



Timely, reliable assessments indicate which children are falling behind in critical reading skills so teachers can help them make better progress in learning to read.

—TORGESEN, 2006

## Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of extracting and constructing meaning from written texts. It has three key elements—the reader, the text, and the activity (RAND Reading Study Group 2002; Snow 2003). Good comprehension instruction requires teachers to consider all of these factors. More important, it involves showing students how these factors affect their understanding when reading. Recent innovations in comprehension instruction have been built on a foundation of what good readers do. Research has shown that the effective reading processes, or strategies, of good readers can be explicitly taught and that doing so improves comprehension (National Reading Panel 2000).

## Reading Assessment

Scientifically based research studies have repeatedly demonstrated the value of regularly assessing students' reading progress (e.g., Fuchs and Fuchs 1999; Shinn 1998). Reliable and valid assessments help monitor the effectiveness of instruction. An assessment is reliable if it provides a dependable, consistent measurement of a particular trait or ability; it is valid if it actually measures that trait or ability (Torgesen 2006).

### Types of Assessment

There are basically four types of assessments—screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and outcome. Screening assessments identify those students who are at risk for reading difficulty. If screening results indicate a potential difficulty, the student is usually provided with additional support and increased progress monitoring. In cases where screening results indicate a severe reading problem, immediate diagnostic evaluation may be warranted. Diagnostic assessment is usually reserved for students who, according to progress monitoring, fail to respond to additional support (Hosp, Hosp, and Howell 2007).