

Session 1: How Does the Brain Learn to Read?

Text Set: Theoretical Frameworks for Reading Development

Before completing this task, make sure you have completed the [pre-assessment](#) for the series.

For this session, we are exploring how neuroscientists and educational researchers explain how the brain learns to read. While these are helpful theoretical frameworks, they offer a simplistic view of how complex reading can be. If you only have time to read one of the texts below, we recommend the podcast episode (27 minutes).

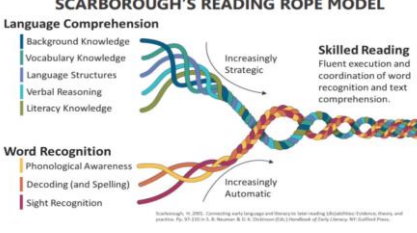
	Text 1 Web Page, Graphics & Video: KDE Structured Literacy (KDE, 2023)	Text 2 Article: “Teaching Reading /s Rocket Science” (Moats, 2020)	Text 3 Podcast Episode: “A simple way of looking at a complex problem” (Wexler, 2023)
What are you learning about the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) while reading each text?			
What are you learning about the Five Pillars of Literacy (National Reading Panel, 2000) while reading each text?			
What are you learning about Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001) while reading each text?			
What comes to mind about your own students and their reading as you read each text?			

My Takeaway: What is something from the texts that you want to impact the way you teach reading or lead reading teachers this year?

Session 2: Decoding Multisyllabic Words in Grade-Level Text

To prepare for session 2, read Recommendation 1 (pp. 4-11) of the [Practice Guide](#).

Before You Read:



The diagram illustrates Scarborough's Reading Rope Model. It features a rope with two main sections: 'Language Comprehension' (top) and 'Word Recognition' (bottom). The 'Language Comprehension' section includes Background Knowledge, Vocabulary Knowledge, Language Structures, Verbal Reasoning, and Literacy Knowledge. The 'Word Recognition' section includes Phonological Awareness, Decoding (and Spelling), and Sight Recognition. The rope is shown as being 'Increasingly Strategic' at the top and 'Increasingly Automatic' at the bottom. The final part of the rope is labeled 'Skilled Reading: Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.'

Recall Scarborough's Reading Rope. How does your school/district currently support middle and high school students with word recognition difficulties (the bottom strand of the rope)?

While You Read:

Note that some of these recommendations are targeted for students with significant word recognition difficulties and may not be appropriate for universal instruction. As you read each section, answer the following reflection questions:

How to carry out the recommendation:

1. Identify the level of students' word-reading skills and teach vowel and consonant letter-sounds and combinations, as necessary.

Reflect on your own acquisition of sound-symbol correspondences (phonics). Did you learn using a systematic, explicit approach? See the [University of Florida Literacy Institute \(UFLI\) sample scope and sequence](#) for an example.

This recommendation is appropriate for an intervention setting. How does your district currently measure word-reading skills for middle and high school students who have been identified with word recognition difficulties?

2. Teach students a routine they can use to decode multisyllabic words.

This recommendation is appropriate for an intervention setting but may support many students in a Tier 1 setting. Access a text you will be using in the next week or next semester in one of your classes. Identify five multisyllabic words you might break apart with students using the four-step routine described on p. 7:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3. Embed spelling instruction in the lesson.

This recommendation is appropriate for an intervention setting but may support many students in a Tier 1 setting. Consider your current vocabulary instruction approach. How might you integrate encoding (spelling) practice into this process?

Example 1.3. Practice activities that can build students' automaticity with multisyllabic word reading

1. As a warm-up provide practice in vowel combinations in the multisyllabic words that students are going to encounter in a word list or section of text for the session.
2. Read a list of high-frequency prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
3. Ask students to underline prefixes and suffixes in each word in a word list, and then read the prefixes and suffixes aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
4. Ask students to write words by adding a prefix and/or a suffix to a base word.
5. Ask students to read a list of words once with their partner, noting any words students have difficulty reading. Then ask them to try to read more words correctly when they read the list to their partner a second time.
6. Read a list of words (up to 20 words) aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns).
7. Time students as they read a list of words. Ask them to read the list again to meet or beat their previous time.
8. Dictate words for students to spell that contain the targeted prefixes and suffixes or sounds in the lesson.
9. Read sentences containing multisyllabic words aloud as a group (in unison or by taking turns) or with the teacher reading first and then the students reading next.
10. Ask students to read the passage containing the words they are learning at least twice.

Source: Toste et al. (2019).

4. Engage students in a wide array of activities that allow them to practice reading multisyllabic words accurately and with increasing automaticity.

This recommendation contains elements appropriate for both intervention and Tier 1 settings.

Read the chart on p. 11:

Which of these might you incorporate into your instruction this week or next semester? Summarize some of your ideas for implementation below:

After You Read:

Read the obstacles listed under the chart on p. 11. Do either of these resonate with your setting? How?

Given the information in the text, what might be some logical next steps for your instruction, department, school and/or district?

Session 3: Building Fluency in Grade-Level Text

To prepare for session 3, read Recommendation 2 (pp. 12-19) of the [Practice Guide](#).

Before You Read:

What do you remember from our last session about supporting students with decoding multisyllabic words? How have you been using the strategies with your students?

While You Read:

As you read each section, answer the following reflection questions:

How to carry out the recommendation:

1. Provide a purpose for each repeated reading.

Not all complex, grade-level texts can or should be read multiple times. The panel of researchers advises selecting a short, content-rich passage with multisyllabic words for students to practice.

We have adapted the recommendation in the Guide to the steps below and will model this in the next session:

Step 1: Read for multisyllabic words.

Step 2: Read for comprehension using comprehension-based questions.

Step 3: Read for analysis using questions tied to the *Kentucky Academic Standards* addressed.

Consider a complex text you will be reading with students in the coming days. How might you follow these three steps for a purposeful re-read of a portion of it for fluency building?

2. Focus some instructional time on reading with prosody.

We will practice this recommendation in the January session with a Shakespearean text because most students (and even college-educated adults) need support with pre-20th century texts.

What is a pre-20th century text your students encounter in your curriculum? What support do you currently provide to help students read those texts fluently?

3. Regularly provide opportunities for students to read a wide range of texts.

This portion discusses the importance of supporting students with syntax.

What is syntax? How words are arranged in a sentence.

What are some ways you're currently supporting students with comprehending more complex syntax in their texts?

After You Read:

The Guide repeatedly emphasizes the importance of showing how fluency is not only for younger readers. What are some ways you might imagine making fluency feel age-appropriate for middle and high school readers?

Session 4: Building Word and World Knowledge in Grade-Level Text

To prepare for session 4, read Recommendation 3, Part A (pp. 29-36) of the [Practice Guide](#).

Before You Read:

What do you remember from our last session about supporting students with fluency? How have you been using the strategies with your students?

While You Read:

As you read each section, answer the following reflection questions:

Reflect: “World and word knowledge have reciprocal relationships with reading: world and word knowledge can help students understand what they’re reading, and reading with understanding will improve students’ knowledge of word meanings and of the world” (p. 22).

Can you think of a time you, a student, or a child you know learned and began using a word more frequently as a result of reading it in context? How did word and world knowledge work together for you or the child?

How many minutes does the panel recommend spending to develop word or world knowledge prior to reading? (p. 22)

How to carry out the recommendation:

1. Develop world knowledge that is relevant for making sense of the passage.

What complex texts will you be teaching in the coming weeks?

How do you intend to build knowledge prior to student reading using some of the suggestions on pp. 22-23? (You may also describe your own tried and true methods for building knowledge.)

2. Teach the meaning of a few words that are essential for understanding the passage.

How do you typically select which words to pre-teach? How many do you typically pre-teach each day? (This is for reflective purposes. There are not wrong answers here.)

Consider the text you used for #1. What are some conceptually central words that you might pre-teach prior to student reading?

3. Teach students how to derive meanings of unknown words using context.

The Guide demonstrates how to engage in teacher modeling for students to grasp this skill. What are some other ways you teach students to use context to determine the meanings of words?

After You Read:

The Guide repeatedly emphasizes the importance of building knowledge to support comprehension. One way we can build knowledge is through informational texts. What are informational texts taught in your grade level and what other content areas do they align with?

Session 5: Comprehension as Process and Product

To prepare for session 5, read Recommendation 3, Parts B-D (pp. 37-64) of the [Practice Guide](#).

Before You Read:

What do you remember from our last session about supporting students with vocabulary and knowledge building? How have you been using the strategies with your students?

While You Read:

As you read each section, answer the following reflection questions:

Recommendation 3B: Consistently provide students with opportunities to ask and answer questions to better understand the text they read.

On p. 38, the Guide describes three types of text-dependent questions:

- **Right There Questions:** recall and comprehension of basic information in the text
- **Think and Search Questions:** inference-based questions that require analysis
- **Author and Me Questions:** evaluative/elaborative questions that require synthesis

Consider a text you're reading with students right now. Practice writing one of each type of question:

1. **Right There:**
2. **Think and Search:**
3. **Author and Me:**

How do you currently create opportunities for students to work collaboratively to answer questions? (p.41)

How do you currently teach students to ask these three types of questions while reading? (p. 44)

Recommendation 3C: Teach students a routine for determining the gist of a short section of text.

The Guide provides two suggested routines for teaching students how to summarize a text:

Suggested Routine 1:

Annotate the text to write a summary (p. 48):

1. Identify and mark the most important person (referred to as the who), place, or thing (referred to as the what) in a section of text.
2. Mark and then list the important information about the most important person, place, or thing.
3. Synthesize or piece together the important information to formulate a gist statement.
4. Write the gist statement in your own words.
5. Check that the gist statement includes all the important information in a short, complete sentence that makes sense.

Do you find that your students already have summarizing skills when they come to your class? Do you find that your students already have annotation skills?

If no, practice this routine and reflect on the outcome. What works (or would work) with this method?

Suggested Routine 2:

Use text structures to anticipate and guide comprehension (p. 51).

Resource 3C.3. Types of text structures and the related questions that help identify the gist

Problem/solution text structures are used to describe a problem and how it was solved.

Question: *What is the problem? What is the solution?*

Cause/effect text structures are used to explain how one thing or event led to or caused another thing or event to happen.

Question: *What happened? What happened as a result?*

Compare/contrast text structures are used to explain how topics are alike or different.

Question: *How are the topics the same? How are they different?*

Do you find that students need support determining and analyzing text structure? What are some ways you support their mastery of this skill?

Recommendation 3D: Teach students to monitor their comprehension as they read.

The Guide acknowledges that students are often understandably hesitant to share when they do not understand. To support students with this, they recommend using some nonsense sentences (p. 60) to create a culture of reporting when we do not understand.

Practice this with your students either with these sentences or some from a text you'll be reading. How did it go? Or how do you imagine this might support them?

The Guide recommends using sentence starters like these on p. 62 to help build metacognitive awareness.

Resource 3D.2. Possible sentence starters to complete after reading

1. Today I learned...
2. I was surprised by...
3. The most useful thing I will take from this lesson is...
4. One thing I am not sure about is...
5. The main thing I want to find out more about is...
6. After this session, I feel...

How do you currently create opportunities for students to reflect on what they have learned?

Session 6: Connecting Skilled Reading to Skilled Writing

To prepare for session 6, read Recommendation 4 (pp. 68-76) of the [Practice Guide](#).

Before You Read:

Last time we talked about supporting student comprehension through comprehension monitoring, syntactic analysis, text-dependent questioning, and creating summaries/gist statements.

We also talked about the importance of emphasizing that comprehension is both a product AND a process.

What are some ways you've been using or processing this learning in your role?

While You Read:

As you read each section, answer the following reflection questions:

p. 69: Prepare for the lesson by carefully selecting appropriate stretch texts, choosing points to stop for discussion and clarification, and identifying words to teach.

What is a text you're reading right that is challenging for students?

What makes this text challenging?

How do you decide where to stop in a text you're reading with students?

How do you layer in writing skills when choosing places to stop?

p.71: Provide significant support as the group works through a stretch text together.

What seems to be your most effective tool for supporting students through a stretch (complex) text?

How can writing likewise serve as a scaffold for students' comprehension of stretch text?

p. 75: After students demonstrate comfort with reading stretch texts with the group, provide students with electronic supports to use when independently reading stretch text to assist with pronunciation of difficult words and word meanings.

What sorts of electronic supports (dictionaries, audio recordings, interactive texts, etc.) do you have available to support students?

How do you balance using electronic tools and supporting students towards independence?

After You Read:

In your own words, why must educators continue to use complex, grade-level texts with students with students of all ability levels?

What kind of access does your district provide to complex, grade-level texts? How might you or others increase that access?