Barriers to Reading Comprehension: Why do they occur and what can we do about them?

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Barriers to Reading Comprehension: Why do they occur and what can we do about them?

- 1. What are the possible roots of poor reading comprehension?
- 2. How can we use assessment tools to guide instruction?
- 3. What are some of the most effective strategies to help students improve comprehension skills?

Digging Deeper into Assessment

- Reading Comprehension skills evaluated on group-administered, standardized tests are best used as indicators of progress in teaching all students to read
- Group-administered tests provide little information to guide instruction or identify **why** students obtained low scores

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF LOW COMPREHENSION SCORES

- Inaccurate or slow identification of words
- Limited vocabulary
- Lack of prior knowledge of content
- Failure to attend to text structures for clues
- Failure to monitor understanding (applying effective comprehension strategies/thinking skills)
- Weak stamina; weak memory (look-backs?)
- Inappropriate test-taking strategies (anxiety, carelessness, failure to understand the task)

Consider adding an informal reading inventory to your assessments

- Analysis of Informal Reading Inventories:
  - Nilsson, N.L. (2008). "A Critical Analysis of Eight Informal Reading Inventories." *The Reading Teacher*, 61(7), pp. 526-536.
  - http://www.readingrockets.org/article/23373?theme=print

What is the *Qualitative Reading Inventory* (5th edition)?

- Individually-administered informal reading inventory
- Latest 2011 edition w/DVD
  - Tables and charts to assist scoring and planning interventions
  - Examples of students reading passages w/scored protocols
  - Sample reports
  - New passages for very beginning readers
  - Additional narrative passages through Grade 3
  - New measure of decoding ability (reading by analogy)

When to use the QRI-5 (2010)

Leslie, L & Caldwell, J.S. Pearson Publications.

- Use for a more comprehensive examination of comprehension of text
- Provide diagnostic information about:
  - 1. Conditions under which students can identify words and comprehend text successfully
  - 2. Conditions that appear to result in unsuccessful word identification, decoding and/or comprehension

How is the QRI-5 different from other Informal Reading Inventories?

- Provides both narrative and expository text at each level
- Passages are divided into those w/ & w/o pictures (pre-primer through second grade levels) to determine reliance on external clues for word I.D. and comprehension.
- Includes assessment of prior knowledge of passage content (familiar/unfamiliar?)

Content of the QRI-5

- Graded word lists
- Narrative and expository passages at pre-primer through high school levels (generally familiar topics)
  - Pre-primer-Grade 2 options with and w/o pictures
- Grade 6-High School (representative of the curriculum)
  - Literature, science, social studies
  - Extended passages, think-alouds

DIAGNOSTIC COMPREHENSION OPTIONS OF THE QRI-V

- Comprehension Ability
  - Narrative/Expository text
  - Prior knowledge assessment
  - Familiar/Unfamiliar text
  - Oral/Silent/Listening formats
  - Unaided free recall
  - Explicit/Implicit questions

We know there's a problem. . .now what?

- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION FROM NATIONAL READING PANEL(2000) www.nationalreadingpanel.org
- Text comprehension is enhanced when. . .
  - Readers actively relate the ideas presented in print to their own knowledge and experiences
  - Construct mental representations in memory
  - Explicit/formal instruction in comprehension strategies enhances understanding

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION FROM NATIONAL READING PANEL(2000) www.nationalreadingpanel.org

- Use of a variety of techniques is recommended
- Teach strategies for:
  - Recall of information
  - Summarizing
  - Question generation

TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

YESTERDAY	TODAY
• Fluent reading = good comprehension • Independent practice in subskills = improved reading comprehension	• Reading as an active process • Activating prior knowledge • Identifying important ideas • Organizing information to facilitate retrieval • Creating webs of connections within text • Metacognition (monitoring understanding)

BEHAVIORS OF GOOD AND POOR READERS
Teaching Adolescents with Learning Disabilities: Strategies and Methods by Donald Deshler, Edwin S. Ellis and B. Keith Lenz

Before Reading. . .	
GOOD READERS	**POOR READERS**
• Activate prior knowledge • Understand task and set purpose • Combine intrinsic and extrinsic motivation • Use positive, affirming self-statements • Choose appropriate strategies	• Start reading without preparation • Begin reading w/o knowing why • Use primarily extrinsic motivation • Use negative, deprecating self-statements • Read w/o considering how to approach the task

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During Reading. . .	
GOOD READERS	**POOR READERS**
Focus attention Monitor their by • Knowing that comprehension is occurring • Knowing what is being understood	• Are easily distracted • Do not know they do not understand • Read to get done • Do not know what to do when they lack understanding • Do not recognize important vocabulary

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During Reading. . .	
GOOD READERS	**POOR READERS**
• Anticipate and predict • Use fix-up strategies when they lack understanding • Use contextual analysis to understand new terms • Use text structure to assist comprehension • Organize and integrate new information	• Do not see any organization • Add on rather than integrate information

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After Reading. . .	
GOOD READERS	**POOR READERS**
• Reflect on what was read • Summarize major ideas • Seek additional information from outside sources • Believe success is a result of effort	• Stop reading and thinking • Believe success is a result of luck

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 1:Speed and accuracy of decoding

- Children who don't develop the ability to read words accurately and quickly will encounter difficulty in comprehension (Perfetti, 1985; 1988)
- Attention over-directed to identifying individual words -> inability to access word meanings efficiently and integrate sentence meanings across a passage

Student Fluency Norms Based on Words Read Orally Correct Per Minute [Adapted from Hasbrouck & Tindal (1992); Howe & Shinn (2001)]

GRADE	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
1	----------	----------	60 wcpm
2	53	78	94
3	79	93	114
4	99	112	118
5	105	118	128
6	115	132	145
7	147	158	167
8	156	167	171

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary

Vocabulary is linked to reading comprehension

- Vocabulary size in kindergarten is an effective predictor of reading comprehension in the middle elementary years (Scarborough, 1998)
- Orally-tested vocabulary at end of Grade 1 predicts more than 30% of grade 11 reading comprehension (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997)

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary (2)

NRP findings on Vocabulary Instruction (2000):

- Vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly
- Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important
- Learning in rich contexts improves vocabulary
- Incidental learning
- Computer technology

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary (3)

Resources:

- Beck, I. L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L.(2002) *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*
- Hiebert, E. H. & Kamil, M. L. (2005) *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice*

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 2: Limited Vocabulary (4)

WORD LISTS:

Biemiller, A. (2009).*Words Worth Teaching: Closing the Vocabulary Gap*. Columbus, Ohio: McGraw Hill.

http://www.textproject.org/teachers/word-lists/ (includes Academic Word Lists)

Collins Cobuild Dictionaries (student-friendly definitions)

Wittels, H. and Greisman, J. (2006). *The Clear and Simple Thesaurus Dictionary*. NY: Grosset and Dunlap.

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 3: Lack of prior knowledge

Major problem:

- Poorest readers read least-> "Matthew Effect"
- Can't wait for decoding skills to develop as knowledge gap increases
- Preteach essential knowledge/vocabulary
- Books on Tape:
  www.LearningAlly.org
  www.Bookshare.org
- Kindle/ipad/Nook read-aloud functions
  http://www.ehow.com/

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 4: Failure to attend to Text Structures

- **NARRATIVE WRITING**
  - Story grammar is the most useful text structure to teach for narrative; Improves comprehension
- **EXPOSITORY WRITING**
  - Contains a variety of text structures
  - More difficult to identify
  - Narrative strategies not helpful

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 4: Failure to attend to Text Structures: Narrative Writing

- Narratives that follow structure of fables (setting-character-goal/problem-events-resolution) are easier for children to recall (Brennan, Bridge, & Winograd, 1986; Stein, 1979)
- Narratives are more structurally familiar
- Primary grade instructional materials are predominantly narratives (Durkin, 1981).

TEXT STRUCTURE: Expository Writing

- Common Text Structures
  - Sequence or chronological presentation
  - Problem/solution
  - Causal relations
  - Compare and contrast
  - Illustrations and examples
  - Narrative writing
  - Descriptive writing

WORDS COMMONLY FOUND IN DIFFERENT TEXT STRUCTURES

Cause and effect and problem and solution	Description
Because As a result Therefore Since Reasons why If. . . then Nevertheless Thus	for example characteristics are includes such as also for instance
http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/12/compare-contrast-cause-effect-problem-solution-common-text-types-in-the-times/	

POSSIBLE PROBLEM 5: Lack of strategy use during reading process

- Comprehension monitoring
- Cooperative learning
- Question answering
- Question generating
- Summarization

Monitoring Comprehension

- Think-Aloud strategy helps students to monitor comprehension of texts they read
  - predicting what happens next ("I bet that. . .")
  - picturing the text ("I can see that. . .")
  - making comparisons ("This reminds me of. . .")
  - identifying problems ("What does this mean?")
  - fixing problems ("Maybe this means. . .")
  - making comments ("I like this part because. . . .")

PEER-ASSISTED LEARNING STRATEGIES (PALS) Fuchs, D. et al, 1997, 2001

- What did you learn first?
- What did you learn next?
- What do you predict will happen?
- Read half a page.
- Did the prediction come true?
- Name the who or what
- Tell the most important thing about the who or what
- Say the main idea in 10 words or less

TYPES/LEVELS OF QUESTIONS

- 70% of teacher questions are literal in nature
- Questions usually require only recognition (locating information) or recall (answering from memory)
- Questions frequently about trivial factual make up of stories (bypass literal understanding of more important info)

TYPES/LEVELS OF QUESTIONS (2)

- Need for more "beyond text" questions that tap higher levels of thinking
  - Critical analysis
  - Interpretation
  - Generalization and expansion of ideas presented in text

PEARSON AND JOHNSON QUESTIONING MODEL (Pearson, P.D. & Johnson, D.D., 1978)

- TEXT EXPLICIT: Answers clearly lifted verbatim from the text
- TEXT IMPLICIT: Answers suggested in text (information needs to be integrated to answer)
- SCRIPT IMPLICIT: Answers drawn from reader's background knowledge rather than from text

RESEARCH ABOUT QUESTIONING

- Students asked text explicit questions. . .
  - Recall parts of text verbatim
- Students asked text implicit questions. . .
  - Draw more inferences from text
  - Integrate ideas within text
- Students asked script implicit questions. . .
  - Make more interpretive/evaluative connections between text and their prior knowledge

QAR (Question/Answer Relationship): (T.Raphael, 1982, 1984, 1986; T. Raphael & K. H. Au, 2005).

- FOUR KINDS OF QUESTIONS
  - Right There
  - Think and Search (also called "Putting It Together")
  - On My Own
  - Author and You

QAR STRATEGY: PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION

- Give immediate feedback
- Progress from shorter to longer texts
- Build independence by guiding students from group to independent activities
- Provide transition from the easier task to the more difficult

QAR RESEARCH RESULTS

- Increase in both quality and quantity of correct answers to comprehension questions
- Particularly effective with children with average to low reading levels
- Higher comprehension scores
- Students transferred strategy to content area classrooms

ReQuest (Manzo, A, 1969)

- Both students and teacher silently read a common segment of text (1-2 sentences to 1-2 paragraphs)
- Teacher closes the book and is questioned about the passage by the students
- Switch roles. Teacher now questions students about material

ReQuest (2)

- When questions are exhausted, the next segment of text is read
- When enough text has been processed to make predictions about the remainder of the assignment, exchange of questions stops. Teacher asks: What do you think the rest of the story will be about? Why do you think so?

RECIPROCAL TEACHING: What is it? (Palincsar, A. S. & Brown, A. 1984)

- Strategies for reading comprehension
- Teaches self-monitoring for comprehension
- Instructional format in the form of a structured dialogue between teachers and students (students assume role of the teacher)
- Dialogue structured by use of four strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing

Research Support

- Originally designed for students who were adequate decoders but poor comprehenders
- Studies and results replicated and carried over to general education classrooms with larger group sizes
- Designed for expository text but easily transferable
- According to research, RT is easy to generalize and transfer to new and unique situations
- Once strategies are internalized, they become automatic and second nature to readers

COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING (Janette K. Klingner and Sharon Vaughn
Teaching Exceptional Children July/August 1998)

- BEFORE READING
  - 1. PREVIEW
    - A. BRAINSTORM: What do we already know about the topic?
    - B. PREDICT: What do we think we will learn about the topic when we read the passage?
- READ (the first page or section)

DURING READING

- 2. CLICK and CLUNK
  - Were there any parts that were hard to understand (clunks)?
  - How can we fix the clunks? (Use fix-up strategies)
    - Reread the sentence and look for key ideas to help you understand the word.
    - Reread the sentence with the clunk and the sentences before or after the clunk looking for clues
    - Look for a prefix or suffix in the word
    - Break the word apart and look for smaller words

MORE FOR DURING READING

- 3. GET THE GIST
  - A. What is the most important person, place or thing?
  - B. What is the most important idea about the person, place or thing?
- READ (Do steps 2 and 3 again, with all the paragraphs or sections in the passage)

AFTER READING

- 4. WRAP UP
  - A. Ask questions: What questions would show we understand the most important information? What are the answers to those questions?
  - B. Review: What did we learn?

RAP: PARAPHRASING STRATEGY (Deshler, Ellis, Lenz, 1996)

- Step 1 **R**ead a paragraph
  As you are reading the paragraph, look for the topic sentences or clue words that signal the main ideas and details
- Step 2 **A**sk yourself, "What were the main idea and details in this paragraph?
  What was this paragraph about? What should I remember about it?"
- Step 3 Put the main idea and details into your own words.
  Say, "This paragraph is about _____."

REQUIREMENTS FOR A PARAPHRASE

- Must contain a complete thought
  - Subject
  - Verb
- Must be totally accurate
- Must have new information
- Must make sense
- Must contain useful information
- Must be in your own words
- Only one general statement per paragraph is allowed

FINDING THE MAIN IDEA: QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What is this paragraph about?
  - This paragraph is about _____.
- What does it tell me about_____?
  - It tells me _____ _____ _____

FINDING THE MAIN IDEA: PLACES TO LOOK

- Look in the first sentence of the paragraph
- Look for repetitions of the same word or words in the whole paragraph

RIDER: A VISUALIZATION STRATEGY (U. of Kansas Center for Research on Learning)

- **R** – Read the first sentence
- **I** – Make a picture in your mind
- **D** – Describe the picture you see
- **E** – Evaluate if your picture makes sense with the story thus far
- **R** – If you picture makes sense, read on. If your picture does not make sense, reread it all again

BENEFITS OF VISUAL LEARNING TECHNIQUES

- Help students to. . .
  - Clarify thinking (process, organize, and prioritize new information)
  - Reinforce understanding (reveal patterns, interrelationships and interdependencies)
  - Integrate new knowledge
  - Identify misconceptions

Uses of graphic and semantic organizers

- activating background knowledge and setting a purpose for reading
- generating lists of character traits with supporting evidence
- helping students to see text structure, aiding in understanding, remembering, retelling and writing summaries
- deepening understanding of unfamiliar vocabulary

DETERMINING CHARACTER TRAITS

- PHYSICAL TRAITS
  - The way people look
- CHARACTER TRAITS
  - Ways to tell what a person is like
  - Help us to understand a character's personality
  - Clues to what someone likes, feels, or how he or she behaves

WAYS WE FIND OUT ABOUT A CHARACTER'S TRAITS

- Direct statements
- Dialogue
- Action
- Observations of appearance

FLATS Strategy for Determining Character Traits (2003, Diana Ambats)

- ***F*** How does your character ***FEEL***?
- ***L*** What does your character ***LOOK*** like?
- ***A*** How does the character ***ACT*** toward….?
  How do others ***ACT*** toward your character?
- ***T*** What is your character ***THINK***ING?
- ***S*** What does your character ***SAY*** about….?
  What do other characters ***SAY*** about him?

Resources for words describing character traits

- https://www.teachervision.com/writing/resource/2669.html
- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/p-as_docs/sample_character_traits.pdf
- http://www.ltl.appstate.edu/reading_resources/Character_Trait_Descriptive_Adjectives.htm
- http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples/character-trait-examples.html

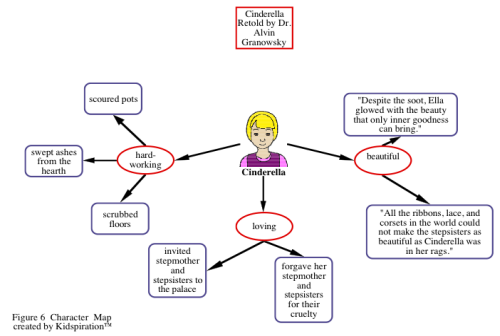

Figure 6 Character Map created by Kidspiration™

RESOURCES

- GENERAL
  - *Report of the National Reading Panel* 800-370-2943 www.nationalreadingpanel.org
  - *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 3rd ed.* (ed. Judith Birsh) Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 2011
- GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS
  - Continental Press 1-800-233-0759
  - Creative Teaching Press 1-800-287-8879
  - A Field Guide to Using Visual Tools by David Hyerle (ASCD Publications 1-800-933-2723)
- Narrative Text Post-Its
  - ELEMENTS OF PLOT POST-ITS
  - Project Read/Language Circle 1-800-450-0343
  - www.storystickies.com

RESOURCES (2)

- Software/apps
  - www.Kidspiration.com
  - www.Inspiration.com
- Websites
  - http://www.meadowscenter.org/vgc/
  - http://www.miamisci.org/tec/ (Reciprocal Teaching materials)
  - http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/readquest/strat
  - http://www.resourceroom.net/index.asp
  - http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/
  - http://coe.jmu.edu/LearningToolbox/ www.peerassistedlearningstrategies.org