



Maximizing the Impact of Decodable Readers

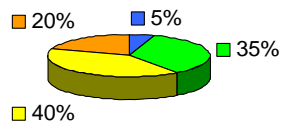
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READING IS COGNITIVELY COMPLEX

"Some people there are who, being grown, forget the horrible task of learning to read. It is perhaps the greatest single effort that the human undertakes, and he must do it as a child."

- John Steinbeck (in Gilbar, 1989, p. 69)

Learning to Read in Kinder is...



■ known ■ easy ■ difficult ■ very difficult

English: A "Tricky" European Language

Table 1. Hypothetical classification of languages (Seymour et al., 2003)

		Orthographic Depth				
		Shallow	→→→→	→→→→	→→→→	Deep
Syllabic Complexity	Simple	Finnish	Greek Italian Spanish	Portuguese	French	
	Complex		German Norwegian Icelandic	Dutch Swedish	Danish	English

ENGLISH WORDS ARE MORPHOPHONEMIC

- Spellings represent morphemes and phonemes
- The sounds often change within related words, but the spellings of the morphemes are more constant
- Examples:
 - board, boardroom, cupboard
 - sign, assignment, signet
 - heal, health, healthy
 - vapor, evaporate, evaporation
 - tripod, triangle, triplets, trinity

STRONG READERS COORDINATE INFORMATION

Phonology + Orthography + Morphology + Vocabulary

(Nagy, Berninger, Abbott, Vaughan, & Vermeulen, 2003)



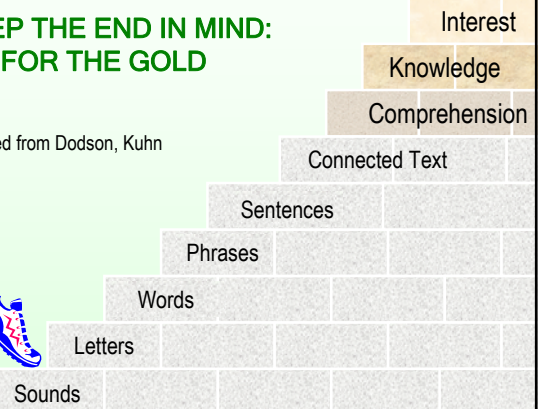
A more effective decodable text would optimize all four elements

ENSURE THAT THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO READ ARE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Success is a powerful motivator

KEEP THE END IN MIND: GO FOR THE GOLD

adapted from Dodson, Kuhn



AND ESTABLISH BASIC SKILLS



TYPES OF BUILDING BLOCKS REGULAR WORDS

In which words do you hear the sound /ă/ as in cat?

sat	stamp	ball
was	champ	brain
quack	walk	farm

TYPES OF BUILDING BLOCKS IRREGULAR WORDS

- Heart words, AKA sight words
- Some words have a part that must be learned by heart!

said
was

"I know them by heart!"

Source: Judi Dodson

WHAT ARE DECODABLE READERS?

Carefully constructed, controlled text

- constrained by regularized phonics patterns
- limited and repeated irregular words
- limited picture clues
- sequential sequence
- short but meaningful
- an application opportunity
- differs from leveled text
- differs from patterned, predictable text



DECODABLE TEXT

What are the cognitive demands of this text?



1. Frog Facts

A frog is an animal. Its skin is slick. It can swim and it can travel on land. If it gets hungry, it sits still until an insect lands by it. Then it snaps the insect up. A frog often sits upon a log to rest. Then it jumps off for a swim. Frogs jump well, and they swim well. A frog has eggs, as hens do. Frog eggs are not as big as hen eggs.

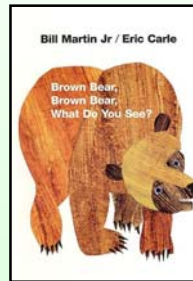
Open Source: www.free-reading.net/images/ff/b/Decodable_nonfiction_1.pdf

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PREDICTABLE, PATTERNED TEXT

What are the cognitive demands?



Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?

– I see a redbird looking at me!

Redbird, redbird, what do you see?

– I see a yellow duck looking at me!

- blue horse
- green frog
- purple cat
- white dog
- black sheep

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LEVELED TEXT

What are the cognitive demands?

words	404
words of 3 or more syllables	16
sentences	37
<i>Flesch-Kincaid grade level</i>	3.5
<i>Fry grade level</i>	3.8
<i>Powers grade level</i>	4.4

Light # 1: narrative

Pam and Janet loved to go rock climbing. The two sisters had been climbing rocks since they were ten years old. Now, the twins were eighteen years old. They had just graduated from high school and their dad was taking them to Lake Powell. Lake Powell is in the states of Arizona and Utah. It is a huge lake. The lake fills the canyons around it. High canyon walls surround the lake. The slippery cliff walls rise two hundred feet above the lake.

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If selected and used carefully, decodable texts can boost confidence and competence, but the evidence is not yet conclusive

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Different Findings for At-Risk First Graders A Tale of Two Similar Studies

Will intervention in PA, explicit decoding, writing, spelling, and reading phonetically controlled text influence reading in at-risk first graders?

Yes, the intervention group significantly outperformed controls on reading, spelling, and decoding. (Pool, Jenkins, & Vadasy, 2000).

Do decodable texts affect reading skills of at-risk first graders?

No. "Results showed broad effects from tutoring in phonics/word study and storybook reading, but no reliable effects for differing levels of text decodability (Jenkins, Peyton, Sander & Vadasy, 2004, p. 77).

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PROMISING RESEARCH

inconclusive as yet

"This study suggests that readers with knowledge of the alphabetic principle, given the same phonics instruction, will apply it more (and with more accuracy and independence) in a highly decodable context"

(Mesmer, 2005)



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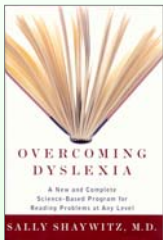
- Juel (1991) found that beginning readers who read text that corresponded to their phonics instruction used more phonologically based word-identification strategies than students who read texts consisting mainly of sight words (see also Juel & Roper/Schneider, 1985)

Dyslexia and Decodables:

- “Given the research, it appears that three main elements are necessary for reading intervention with dyslexics: (a) phonological awareness training, (b) systematic phonics instruction that is linked to spelling, and (c) oral reading practice with decodable texts” (Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, & Seidenberg, 2001, p. 45).

Children with Dyslexia

- Dyslexia is primarily due to a language based deficit in phonology
- It is manifested as an individual's inability to adequately decode words
- It may be exacerbated by attention deficit disorder, behavioral problems, etc. (comorbidity)
- Using a discrepancy model to qualify a student as dyslexic is not sufficient
 - RTI (response to intervention) should prove more effective



“Simple booklets, about twelve-to-twenty-four pages—so-called decodable texts (containing the words with letter–sound patterns that a child has already been taught)—can help him apply his newfound skills by actually reading words in a book” (Shaywitz, 2003, p. 189)

“Reading decodable text provides a bridge between phonics instruction and the reading of trade books”



(Moats, 2000, p. 148)

KEEPING THE END IN MIND

Do you know where you're going to?



NICHHD, 2000

WHAT IS A WELL-WRITTEN TEXT?

“Well-written and engaging texts that include words that children can decipher give them the chance to apply emerging skills with ease and accuracy”

(Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 195)

THE COMPREHENSIBILITY FACTOR






- Interest is triggered by self-efficacy, and by a well-written, comprehensible text
 - (e.g., Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Schraw & Lehman, 2001)
- Interest wanes if the “plot” is incomprehensible
- What makes a text comprehensible?


SELF-EFFICACY & INTEREST A Goldilocks Effect



Interest is more likely to engage if the task is appraised as challenging but not too difficult, within reach but not a cakewalk. Instruction offsets the negative influence of low self-efficacy (Hidi & Ainley, 2008; Silvia, 2003; Willingham, 2009)

DISPLAY DECODING POSTERS

<p><u>Decoding Steps</u></p> <p>See </p> <p>Say and Listen  </p> <p>Repeat 1 2 3 </p> <p>Get help </p>	<p><u>Reading Tips</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweep under the word. • Look for final silent e, or suffix. • Say each sound slowly. • Say the sounds faster.
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/ä/ apple

A LOGICAL SEQUENCE

- Teach and practice the phonics pattern
- Teach and practice the irregular words
- Teach key vocabulary, at least in oral language
- Practice reading words, phrases, and sentences
- Distribute the books
- Preview the title and discuss predictions
- Read silently, then aloud
- Read the story several more times (active reading)
- Discuss the story

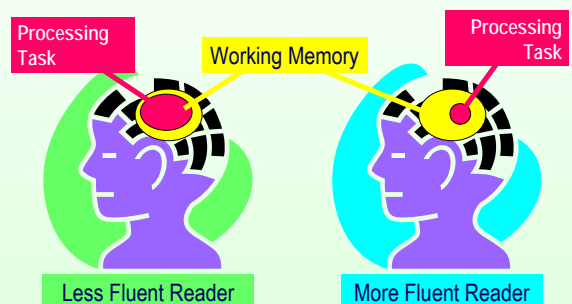
READY? OR NOT?

Read the book after the phonics pattern and irregular words have been mastered —when the reading process has become at least semi-automatic.

Ensure success and enjoyment.

AUTOMATICITY ENABLES COMPREHENSION

Source: Colorado Reading First



SUCCESS WITH SIGHT WORDS

- Teacher previews the irregular words in the decodable text
- Preteach the irregular words
 - Examine which parts of the word are misfits
 - e.g., in *friend*, everything but the third letter “fits”
 - See, say, trace, write
 - Flashcards: words, phrases, sentences
 - Provide ongoing review and practice of sight words
 - Word walls, sorting activities, flashcards, etc.

ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT READING

- Use finger to narrow and focus attention (Ehri)
- Teach children to persist, model it
 - Make several attempts at unknown words
 - Aim for student-achieved success
 - Develop the habit of perseverance
 - Develop self-efficacy and autonomy

ERROR CORRECTION BE KIND, PLEASE REWIND

- Re-read the misread word
- Re-read the whole misread sentence
- Possibly re-read the whole page (if it is short)
- Do this to enable comprehension

AFFIRM WHAT THEY DID RIGHT

- Student reads *nap* instead of *nab*
 - You said the first two sounds correctly!
 - Look again at the last letter.
- Student reads *when* instead of *then*
 - Yes, it does end with /en/
 - Look closely at the first two letters.

ACTIVE READING STRATEGIES

- Choral reading: Everyone together, in unison
- Choral reading with emphasis: Pre-select specific words to be read with extra emphasis and meaning
- Cloze reading: When teacher stops, students say the next word in the sentence
- Echo reading: Readers echo the leader
- Partner reading: Students read together

CHORAL READING WITH EMPHASIS

Open /i/ book. Which word(s) would you emphasize?

Titus wished the car could fly. He was so excited he could not keep silent. He was hyper. In fact, he chattered all the way, nonstop.

Bry finally laughed, saying, “Chill out!”

Try it. Which word(s) would you emphasize?



Farming is just one skill. There are many other skills. People learn differing skills, because people are different.

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READING WITH A PARTNER

- Use finger to point the way
- Read loudly enough for partner to hear
- Partner helps only when asked
 - Reader must make several attempts first
- Partner is encouraging and helpful
- Partner signs the book (if consumable)

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ANNOTATE CONSUMABLE TEXT

- This book belongs to.....
- Get signatures from each “readee”
- Highlight rhyming words with the same color
 - **bat cat sat mat pat**
- Underline words that contain the phonics pattern
 - morning, chores, corn, storm, born
- Draw a heart for each high frequency word, “I know it by heart”



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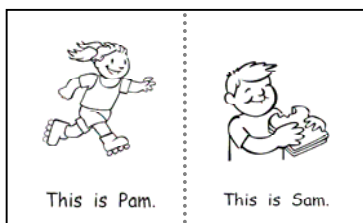
SMALLER GROUPS, DEEPER NEEDS

- The deeper the need, the smaller the group
- Avoid mental exhaustion and the frustration factor
 - increase the frequency of group meetings, but reduce the length of time
- Develop accuracy first, then increase rate
- Engaging, affirming (active reading strategies)
- Maintain a perky pace

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INTENSIVE LEARNERS NEED > PRACTICE



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http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/printable_booklets.html

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IS EXTRA PRACTICE NEEDED?

- If so, provide practice in short segments of time
- Download free books: [www. freereading.net](http://www.freereading.net)

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INTERACTIVE, FREE, ONLINE

Starfall Reading

- by Blue Mountain Arts
– www.starfall.com
- Useful for computer centers
- Individualized instruction for intensive learners
- Click unknown words—computer “reads” it aloud

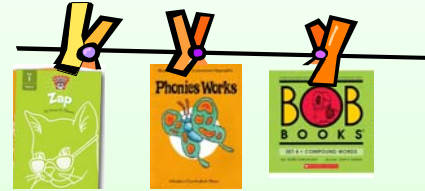


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After a specific linguistic principle has been mastered, make code-specific books available.



Hang books on clothesline or display in pocket charts

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PRACTICE AT HOME

Home-School Continuity

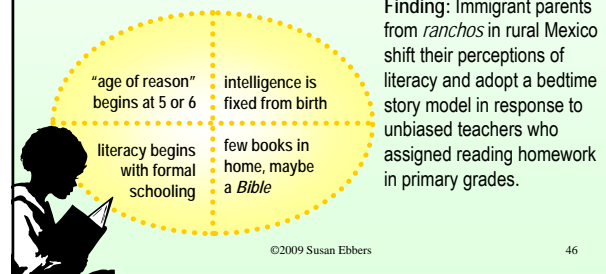
- Send the story home with students (blackline master)
- As homework, students read the story two times
- Each time they read, students get a signature
 - Option: Read to someone on the phone (lifeline) or to a pet

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HOME-SCHOOL CONTINUITY

Immigrant Latino Literacy Notions
(Los Angeles Longitudinal Study)
Reese & Gallimore, 2000 (and see Fuller, 2007)



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SET GOALS, MONITOR PROGRESS

Tangible and unyielding goals are the focus of high-performing schools

Carter, 1999, p.5

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ASSESSMENTS

- Based on needs revealed by data
 - Comprehensive reading program assessments
 - DIBELS data
 - Fluency norms
 - Phonics screeners, surveys
 - Encoding results

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ORAL READING FLUENCY DIBELS benchmarks

	Words correct per minute (benchmark)		
Grade	Beginning	Middle	End of Year
K	n/a	n/a	n/a
1 st	n/a	20+	40+
2	44+	68+	90+
3 rd	77+	92+	110+

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CHART RATE AND ACCURACY

Book	Alpha Skill	Date	WCPM
The Map	/ă/	9-13-09	36 (-3)
Pop!	/ô/	9-24-09	38 (-4)

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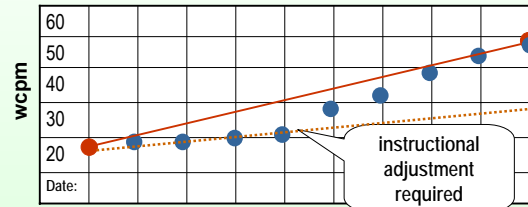
CHART MASTERY: SIGHT WORDS

Book	HFWS	by heart
The Map	a	♥
" "	to	♥
Pop	the	♥
" "	said	

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FIRST CREATE AN AIMLINE THEN MONITOR PROGRESS



Fluency recorded every two weeks

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Review, Revisit, Remember

Distribute Practice over Time



"There is a mountain of evidence suggesting that spacing study time leads to better memory of the material"

Daniel Willingham, 2002

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REVIEW OR REVISIT THE TEXT

- Divide the class into partnerships
- Partners select a book they have previously read
- Partners re-read together

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CORNER CLUBS

- Give the class a choice of 4 books to re-read
- Students go to the corner that displays their preference
- Each "corner club" discusses why they selected that book
- The corner club re-reads the book
- Point out how much fluency has improved over time



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SUMMARY

- Select comprehensible books that align with skills
- Use brief assessments to guide instruction
- Differentiate according to need
- Teach the phonics pattern and sight words well
- Ensure that the first attempt to read is successful
- Use active reading strategies to engage the learner
- Provide multiple opportunities to re-read the book
- Keep a perky pace
- Provide distributed review and practice with explicit feedback
- Graduate into trade books asap

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THANK YOU & BEST WISHES!

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