

Teaching Every Child to Read: The Instructional challenges

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The goal of our work in Reading First is to insure that all our schools are able to:

Help all the children like Andrew fly to even greater heights and advance to complex reading skills

Insure that all the children like David receive the explicit and systematic support they need to build a foundation from which they, too, can fly

Something almost everyone can agree on about reading

The best way to determine whether we have been successful in teaching all children to read is to assess their reading comprehension using reliable and valid tests

Our goal is to help all children acquire the skills and knowledge required to construct meaning from text: we also want them to read fluently and to value reading for pleasure and learning

What skills,
knowledge, and
attitudes are
required for good
reading
comprehension?



What we know about the factors that affect reading comprehension

Proficient comprehension of text is influenced by:

Accurate and fluent word reading skills

Oral language skills (vocabulary, linguistic comprehension)

Extent of conceptual and factual knowledge

Knowledge and skill in use of cognitive strategies to improve comprehension or repair it when it breaks down.

Reasoning and inferential skills

Motivation to understand and interest in task and materials

Effective early reading instruction must build reading skills in five important areas by providing instruction that is both engaging and motivating.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics

Fluency

Vocabulary

Comprehension strategies

Taught by methods
that are...

Identifying words
accurately and
fluently

Constructing
meaning
once words
are identified

engaging & motivating

Taking a closer look at the skills and knowledge that are required to perform well on measures of reading comprehension given in third grade and higher

Do the skills that contribute most importantly to performance on these tests change from 3rd to 7th, to 10th grades?

What areas are most troublesome for children who struggle on these tests?

How the study was conducted:

Gave 2 hour battery of language, reading, nonverbal reasoning, and memory tests to approximately 200 randomly selected children in each grade at 3 locations in Florida who had also taken the SAT9 test.

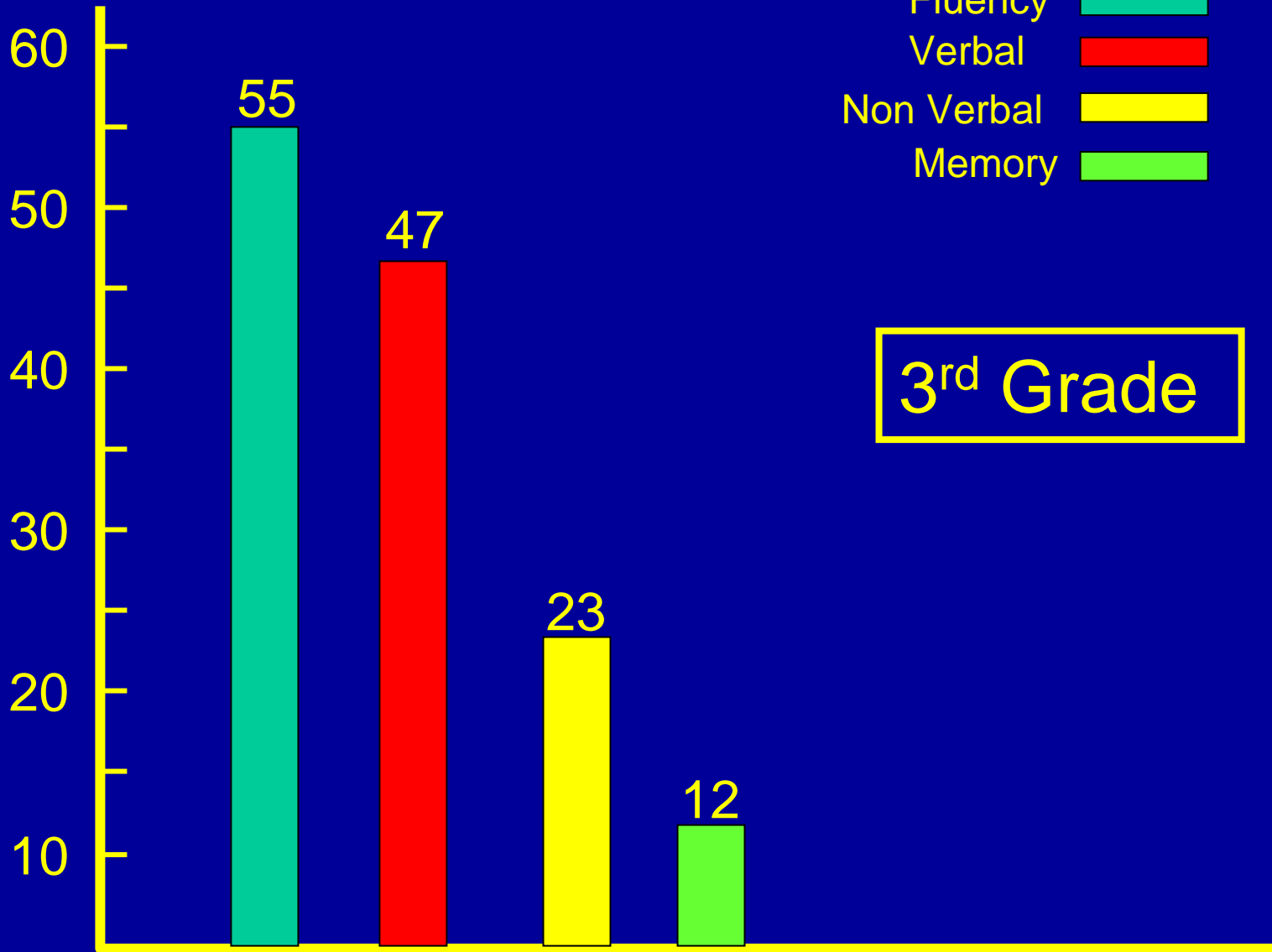
Language – Wisc Vocab and Similarities
Listening comprehension

Reading– Oral reading fluency passages, TOWRE, Gray
Oral Reading Test

NV Reasoning – Wisc Matrix Reasoning, Block Design

Working Memory– Listening span, Reading Span

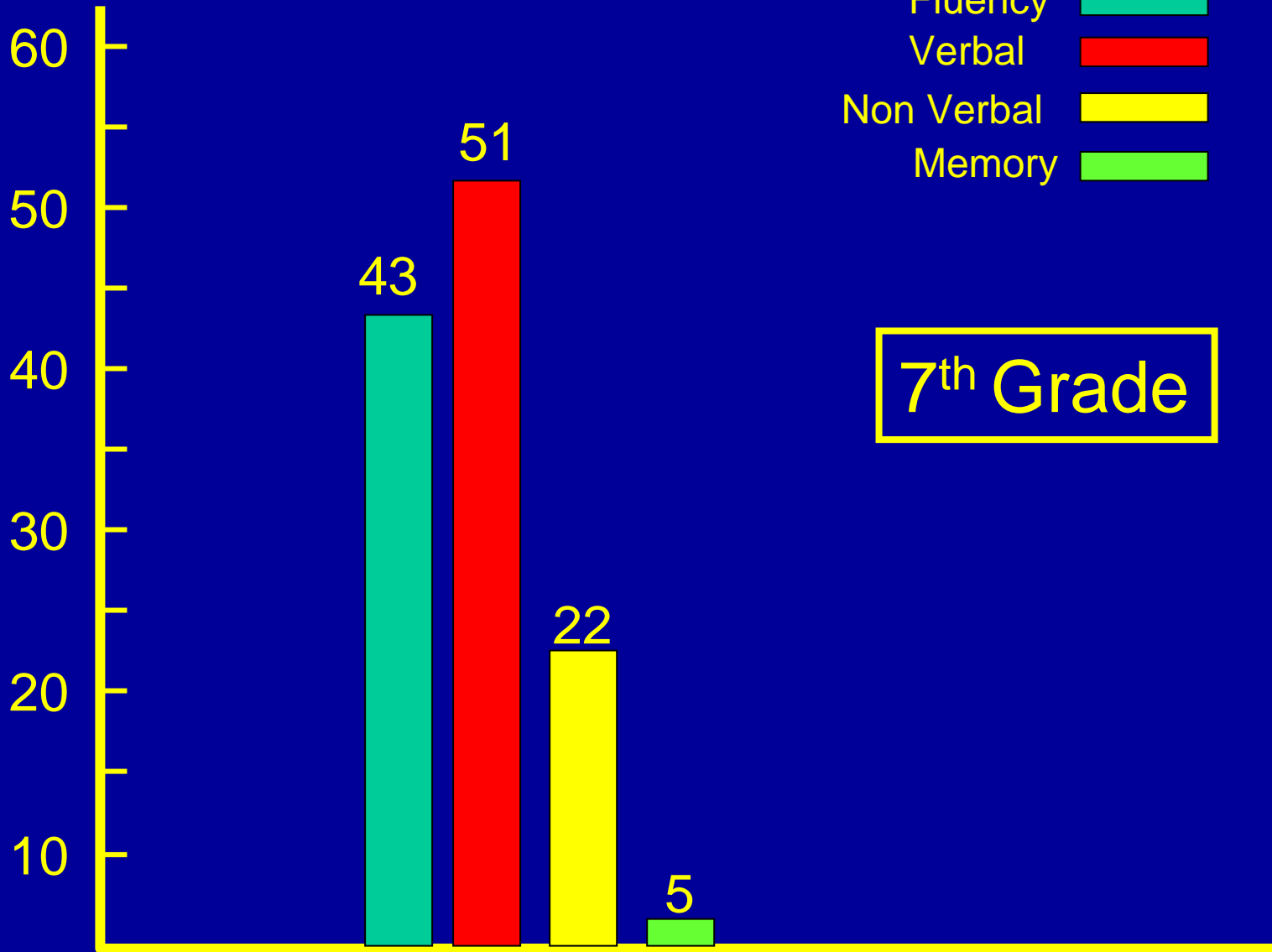
Percent of variance accounted for



- Fluency
- Verbal
- Non Verbal
- Memory

3rd Grade

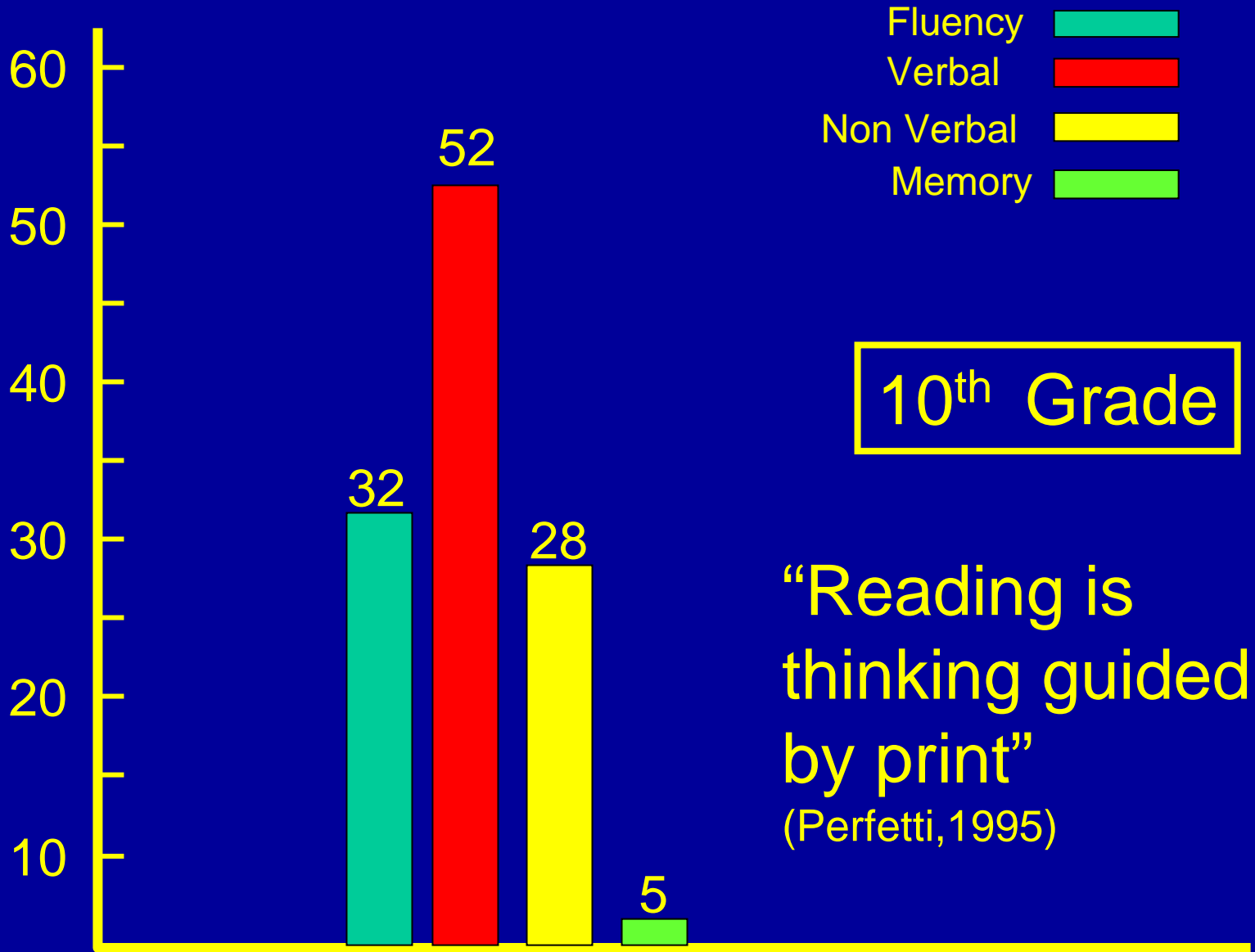
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- Fluency
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- Memory

7th Grade

Percent of variance accounted for



10th Grade

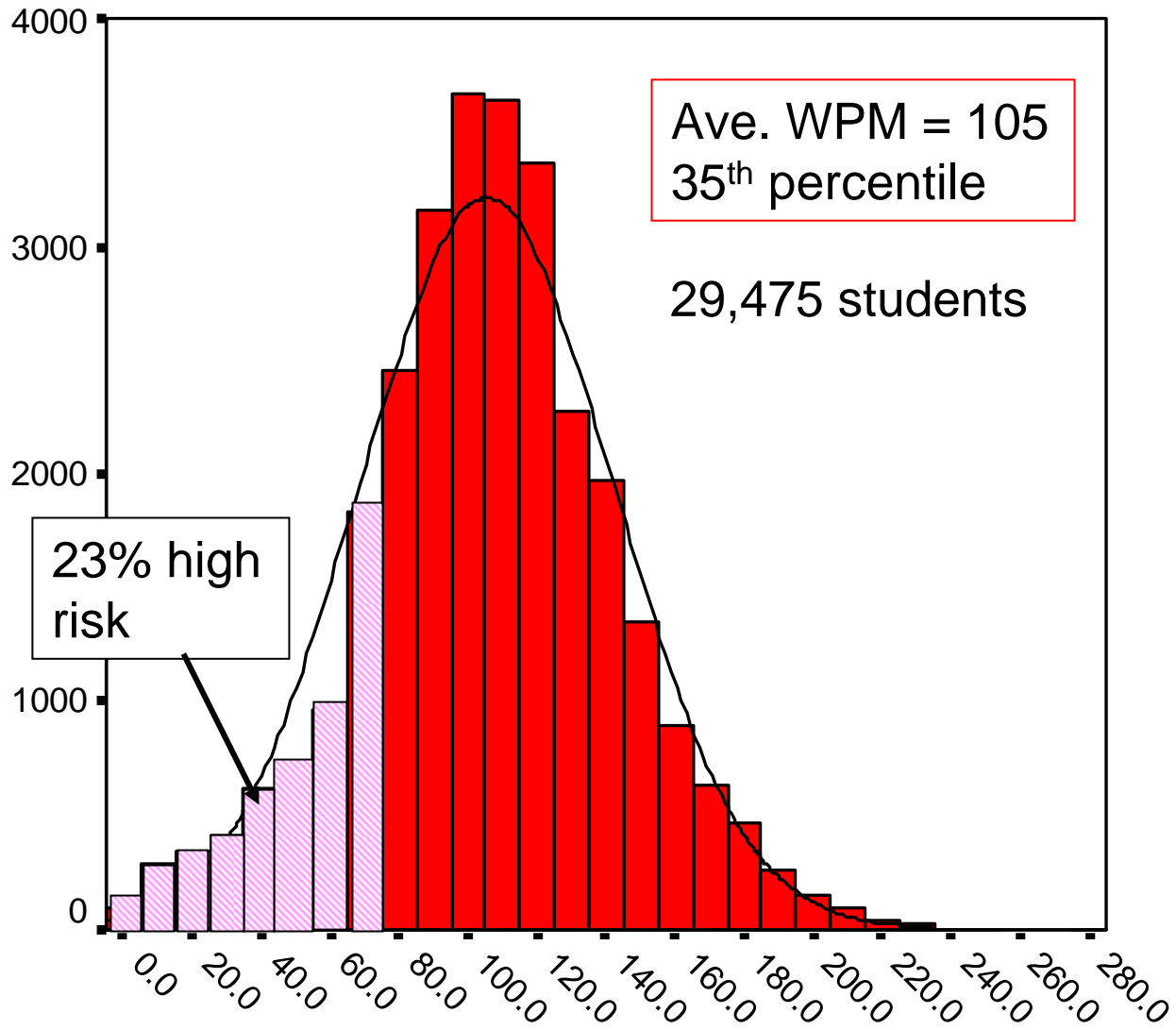
“Reading is thinking guided by print”
(Perfetti, 1995)

Important Conclusions from the Study

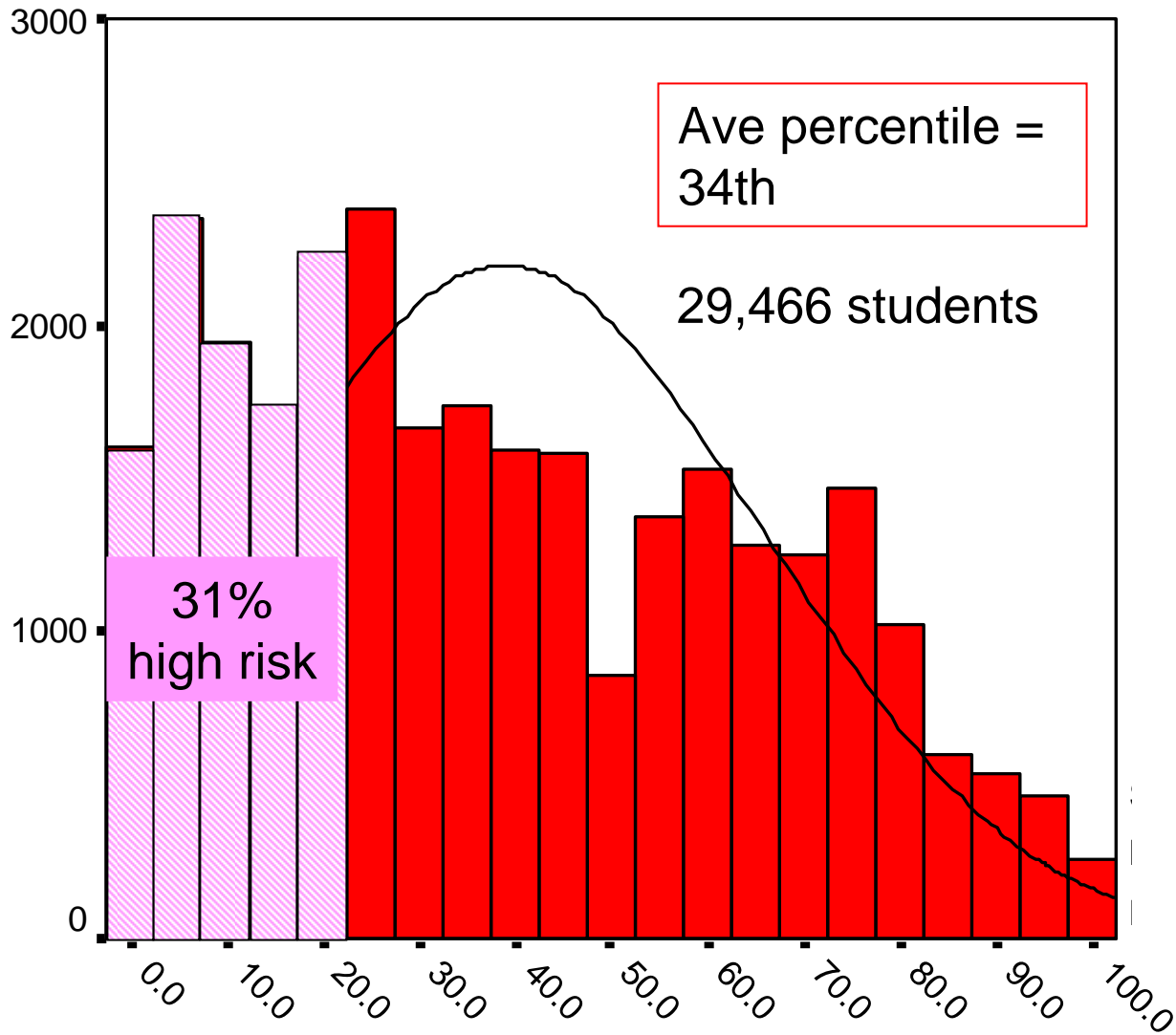
1. The most important reading and language factors that explain individual differences in performance on a widely used measure of reading comprehension are reading fluency and vocabulary/verbal reasoning
2. Differences in reading fluency (accuracy and speed) are particularly important in explaining differences among children in performance at third grade, and vocabulary/verbal reasoning differences become increasingly more important as text becomes more complex

What difficulties are many children in
Reading First Schools Likely to
experience on these tests?

Let's look at some data from one
large state -- Florida



Oral Reading Fluency – End of Third Grade



Receptive vocabulary, End of Third Grade

We know how to help almost
all children become accurate
and fluent readers by third
grade

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

in their pursuit of every child

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

Let no child “escape” from first grade without being proficient in phonemic decoding skills

Why is it important for children to acquire good phonemic decoding skills (phonics) early in reading development?

Because learning to read involves *everyday* encounters with words the child has never before seen in print.

Phonemic analysis provides the most important single clue to the identity of unknown words in print.

The most efficient way to make an “accurate first attempt” at the identity of a new word is:

First, do phonemic analysis and try an approximate pronunciation

Then, close in on the exact right word by finding one containing the right sounds, that also makes sense in the sentence.

(chapter 10, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children
(2000))

The connection to reading fluency:

To be a fluent reader, a child must be able to recognize most of the words in a passage “by sight”

These are iNTirEStinG and cHallinGinG times for anyone whose pRoFEshuNle responsibilities are rEelaTed in any way to liTiRucY outcomes among school children. For, in spite of all our new NaWLEGe about reading and reading iNstRukshun, there is a wide-spread concern that public EdgUkAshuN is not as eFfEktlve as it shood be in tEechiNg all children to read.

The report of the National Research Council pointed out that these concerns about literacy derive not from declining levels of literacy in our schools but rather from recognition that the demands for high levels of literacy are rapidly accelerating in our society.

The connection to reading fluency:

To be a fluent reader, a child must be able to recognize most of the words in a passage “by sight”

Children must correctly identify words 3-8 times before they become “sight words”

Children must make accurate first attempts when they encounter new words, or the growth of their “sight word vocabulary” will be delayed—they will not become fluent readers

Words likely
to be
encountered
for the first
time in first
grade

animal

faster

happy

never

time

sleep

rabbit

Words likely
to be
encountered
for the first
time in
second grade

amaze

beach

comfortable

example

interesting

grease

stiff

sweep

Passage from 3rd grade reading comprehension test

_____ the middle _____, it was the
_____ for a _____ to wear his full
set of _____ whenever he
_____ in _____ - even in times
of _____! When a _____ believed
he was _____ friends, he would
_____ his _____. This _____
of _____ showed that the
_____ felt _____ and safe.

Passage from 3rd grade reading comprehension test

During the middle ages, it was the custom for a knight to wear his full set of armor whenever he appeared in public - even in times of peace!

When a knight believed he was among friends, he would remove his helmet.

This symbol of friendship showed that the knight felt welcome and safe.

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

As children become accurate and independent readers, encourage, cajole, lead, beg, support, demand, reward them for reading as broadly and deeply as possible

Dysfluent reading at the end of third grade: three common paths

1. Failure to acquire and use phonemic decoding skills while reading. This interferes with independent reading, and makes reading inaccurate. Both these things interfere with growth of reading fluency
2. Acquiring phonemic decoding skills late - mid second grade or early third grade. This causes the child to miss out on one or two years of productive fluency practice
3. Early acquisition of phonemic decoding skills, but failure to use them in wide reading. This reduces opportunities for learning to recognize the thousands of word 'by sight' that are required for fluent reading in third grade.

What evidence is there
that we know how to
help all children become
accurate and fluent
readers by third grade?

We can prevent early problems with reading accuracy in almost all children

Percent of children scoring below the 30th percentile

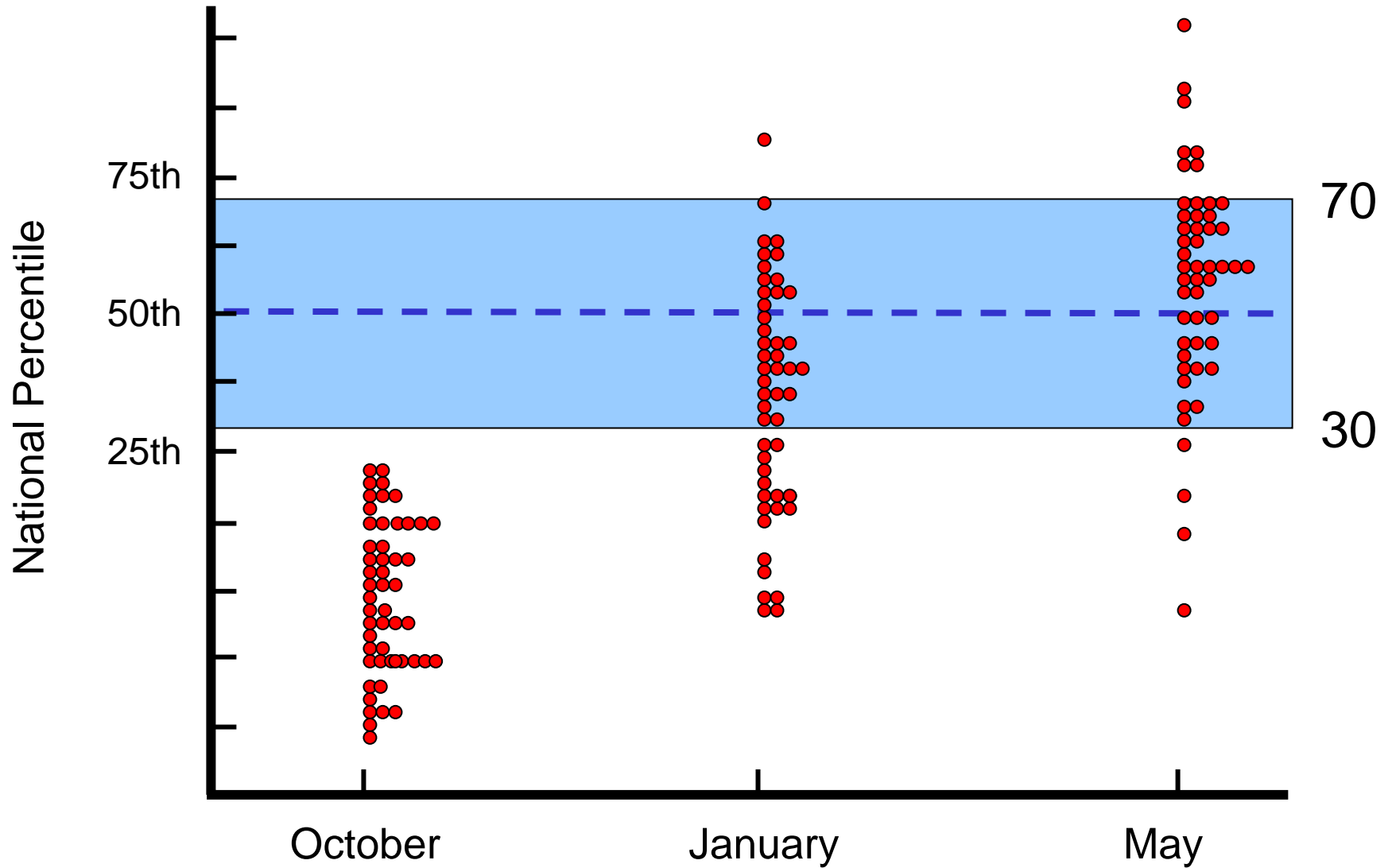
<u>Study</u>	<u>Amt. of instruction</u>	<u>% delayed</u>	<u>overall %</u>
Foorman	174 hrs.- classroom	35%	6%
Felton	340 hrs. - groups of 8	32%	5%
Vellutino	35- 65 hrs. 1:1 tutoring	46%	7%
Torgesen	88 hrs. 1:1 tutoring	30%	4%
Torgesen	80 hrs. 1:3 tutoring	11%	2%
Torgesen	91 hrs. 1:3 or 1:5 tutoring	8%	1.6%
Mathes	80 hrs. 1:3 tutoring	1%	.02%

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Growth in Word Reading Ability

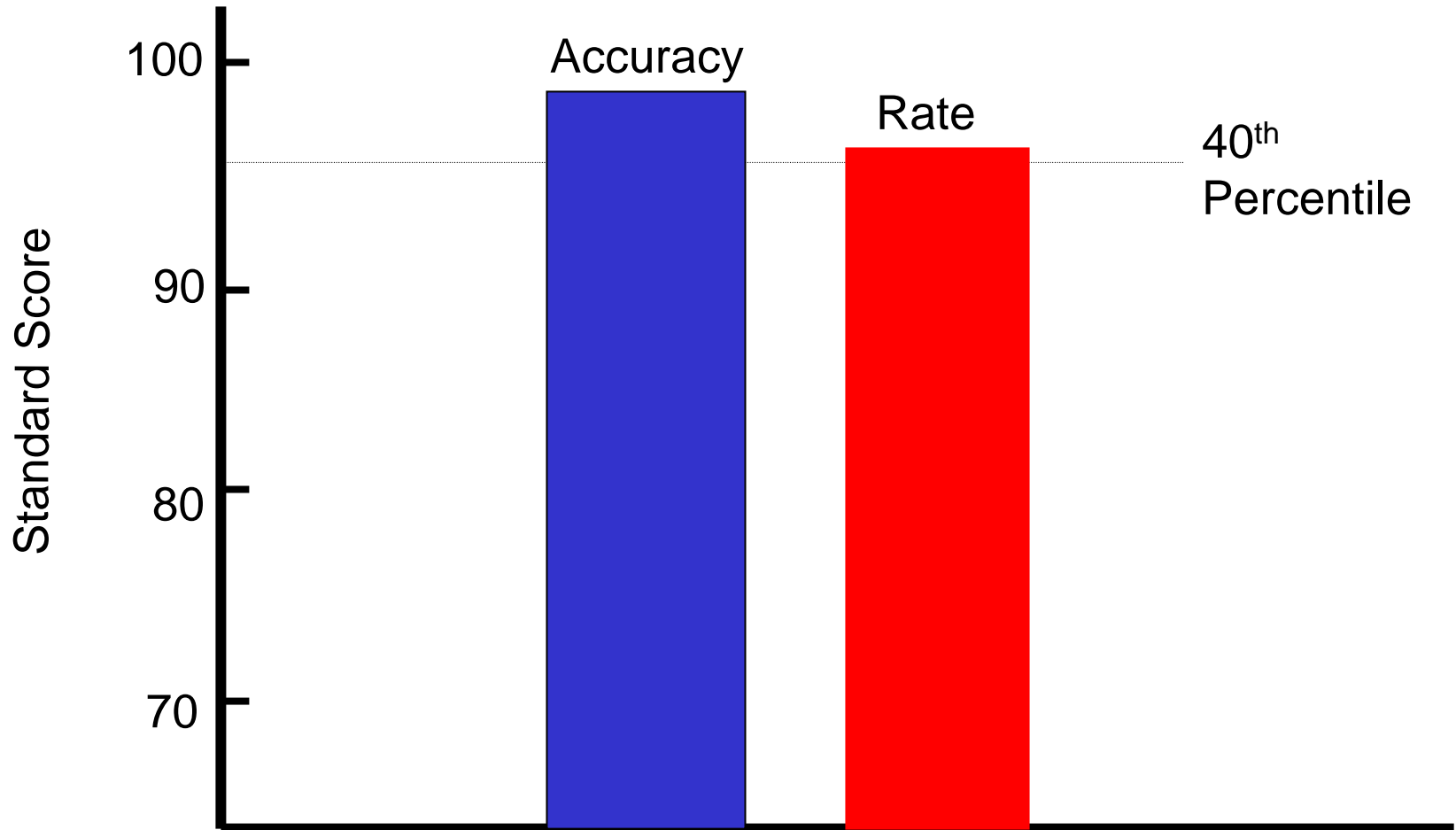


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Fourth grade follow-up for students participating in early intervention through second grade



Evidence from one school that we can do substantially better than ever before

School Characteristics:

70% Free and Reduced Lunch (going up each year)

65% minority (mostly African-American)

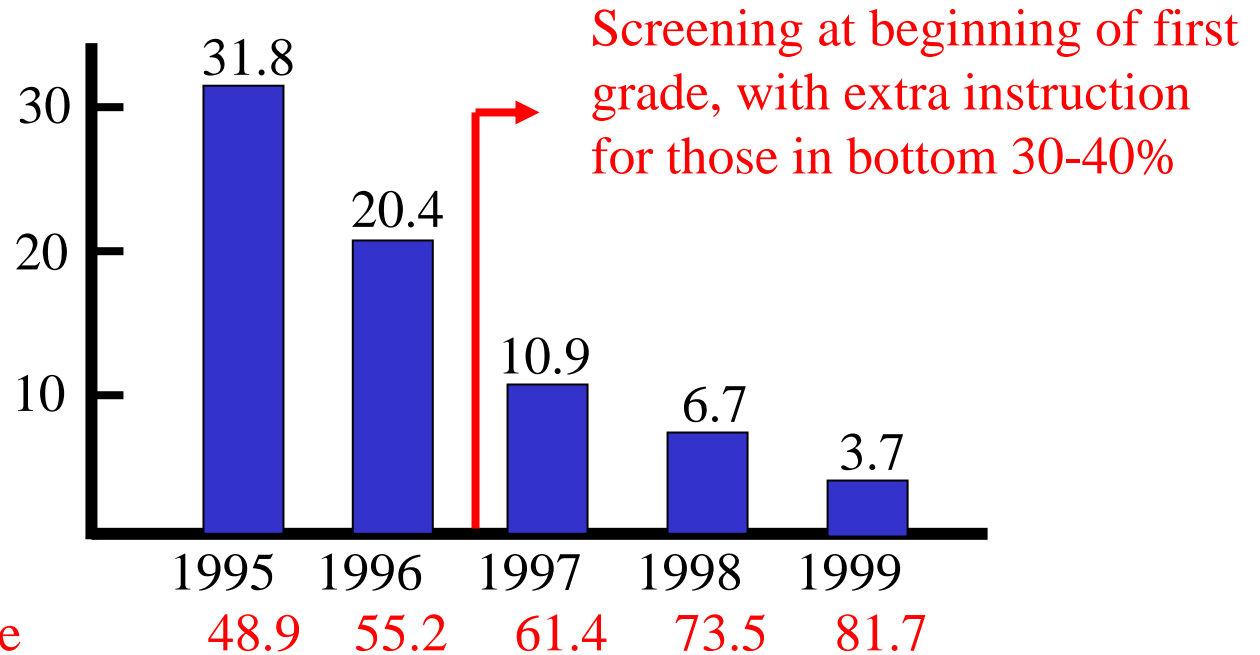
Elements of Curriculum Change:

Movement to a more systematic and explicit reading curriculum beginning in 1994-1995 school year (incomplete implementation) for K-2, Improved implementation in 1995-1996

Implementation in Fall of 1996 of screening and more intensive small group instruction for at-risk students

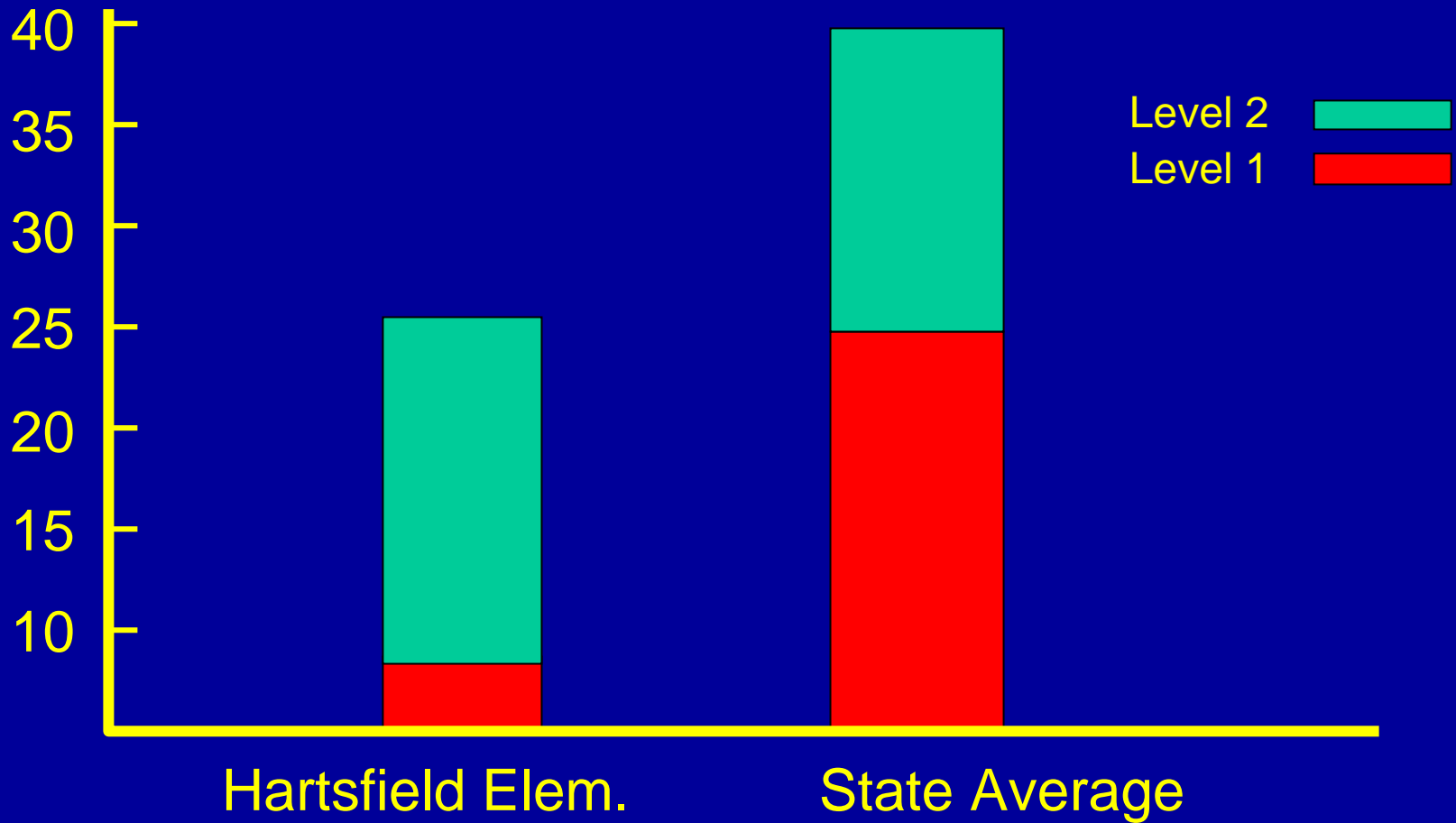
Hartsfield Elementary Progress over five years

Proportion falling below the 25th percentile in word reading ability at the end of first grade



Average Percentile for entire grade (n=105)

FCAT Performance in Spring, 2003



Why the disparity between early word-level outcomes and later comprehension of complex texts?

Demands of vocabulary in complex text at third grade and higher place stress on the remaining SES related “vocabulary gap”

More complex text demands reading comprehension strategies and higher level thinking and reasoning skills that remain “deficient” in many children

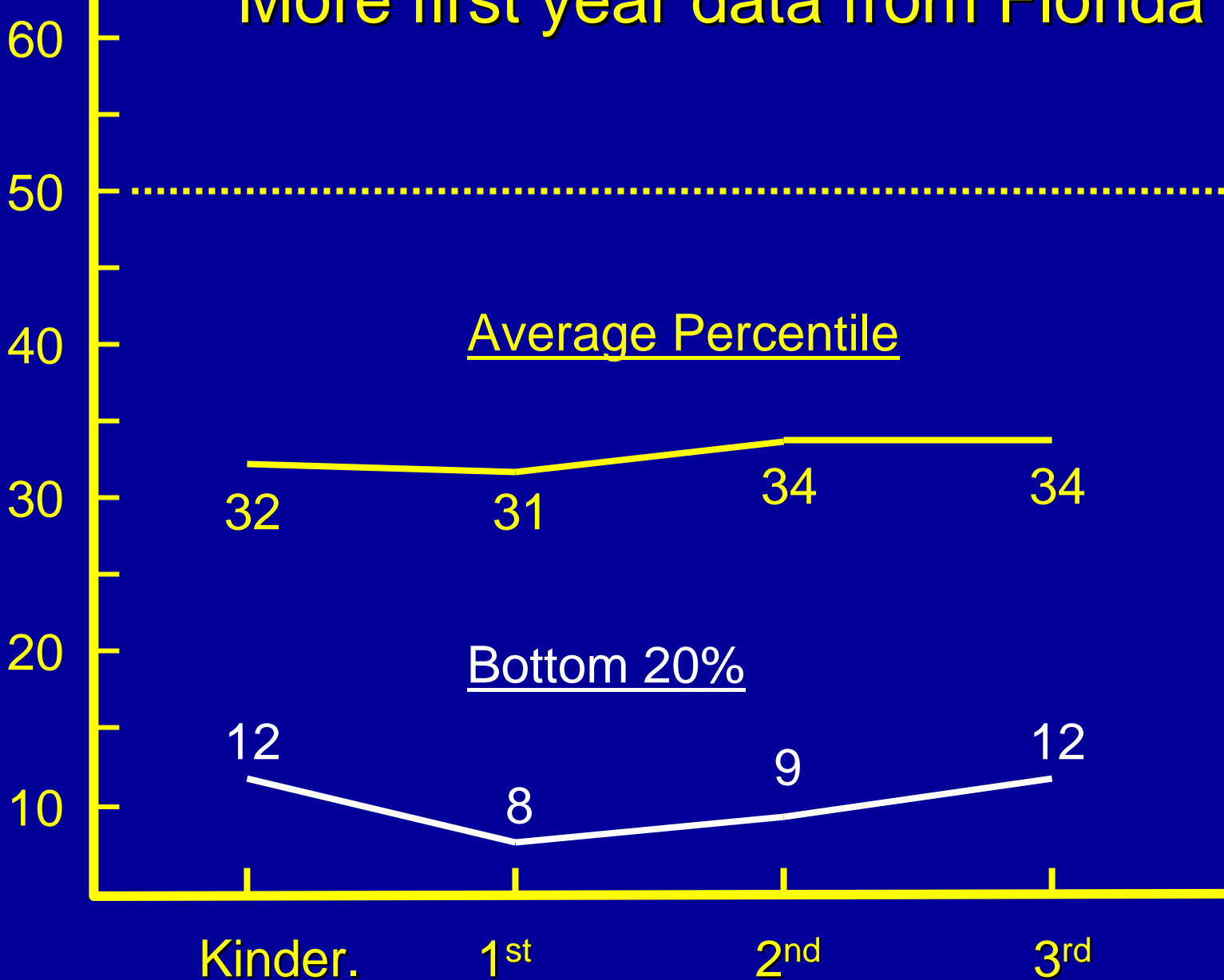
The Challenge of the “vocabulary gap”

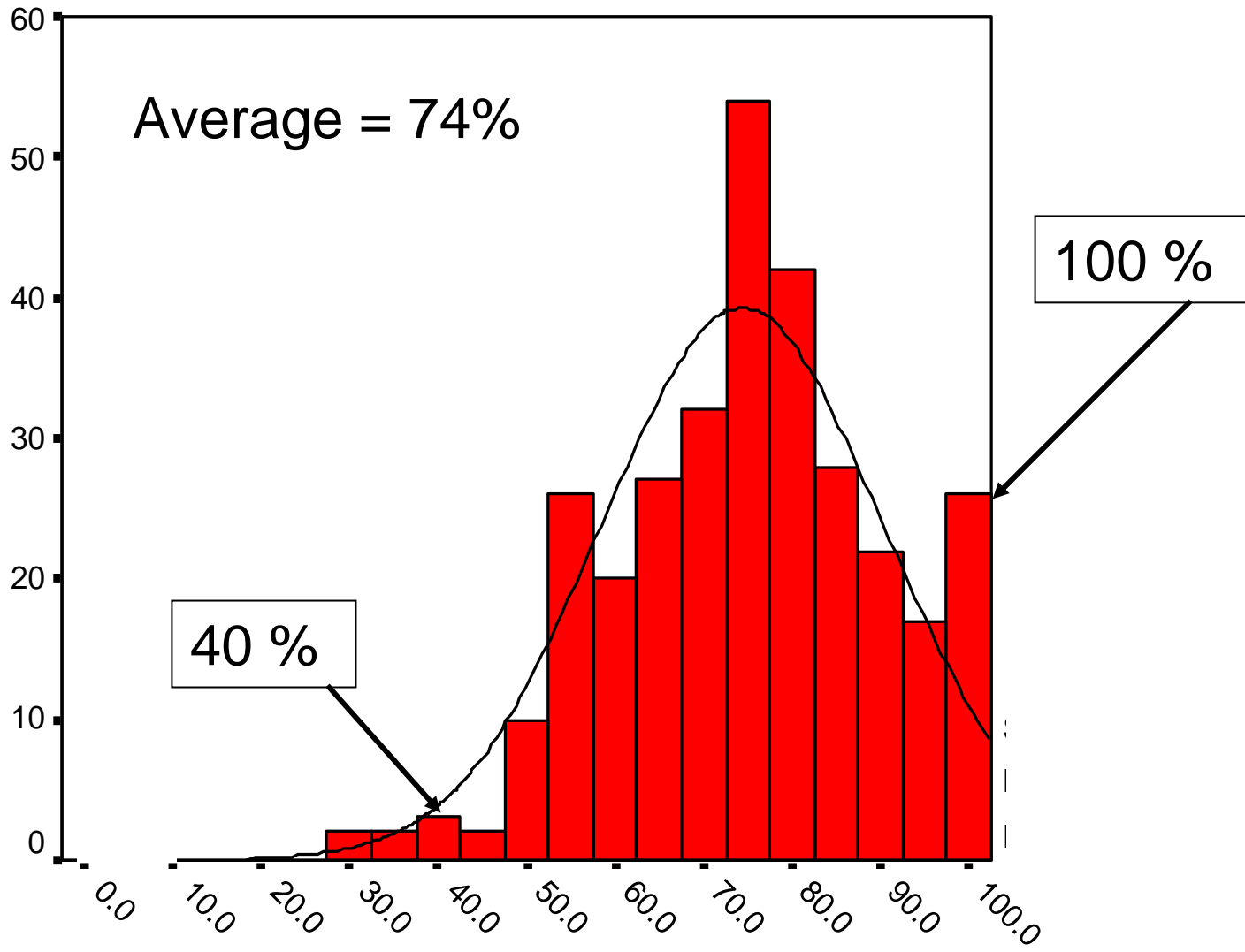
This gap arises because of massive differences in opportunities to learn “school vocabulary” in the home

The gap must be significantly reduced in order to enable proficient reading comprehension of complex texts by third grade

More first year data from Florida

Percentile on test of Oral Vocab.





Percent free/reduced lunch students

BRINGING WORDS

Robust
Vocabulary
Instruction

TO LIFE

ISABEL L. BECK

MARGARET G. McKEOWN

LINDA KUCAN

Bringing Words to Life

Isabel Beck

M. McKeown

L. Kucan

Guilford Press

Big ideas from “Bringing Words to Life”

First-grade children from higher SES groups know about twice as many words as lower SES children

Poor children, who enter school with vocabulary deficiencies have a particularly difficult time learning words from “context”

Research has discovered much more powerful ways of teaching vocabulary than are typically used in classrooms

A “robust” approach to vocabulary instruction involves directly explaining the meanings of words along with thought-provoking, playful, interactive follow-up.

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

Beginning in Kindergarten, teach vocabulary and thinking skills as intensely, and robustly as possible

Remember what reading becomes as children move through elementary and into middle and high school

Reading Comprehension is:

“thinking guided by print”

Perfetti, 1985

Conclusions:

We know how to prevent problems in reading accuracy and fluency in almost all children—whether we do it or not depends most on “how we feel about the fact we haven’t done it so far”

We have some promising new techniques for teaching vocabulary in a way that will generalize to reading comprehension. We must incorporate these techniques into our instruction in a very powerful way.

One final thought...

To "leave no child behind in reading is the most difficult educational challenge any of us have ever faced

It will require relentless pursuit of the goal of teaching all children what they need to know to be good readers....



Thank You