Reading K-12: The View from 10,000 Feet Above School Level

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The Plan:

Describe the 5 most important facts about reading for elementary, middle, and high school principals.

Describe 3 critical implications of these facts for leaders as they provide leadership for instruction to meet the needs of every child.
The facts:

1. The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to enable children to read fluently with good comprehension.

In Florida:

To help students acquire the knowledge and skill they need to read grade level text fluently with understanding. Students also must be able to think about, and apply what they learn from text.
The facts:

1. The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to enable children to read fluently with good comprehension.

2. Three basic problems create most of the reading difficulties our students experience.
Three most important stumbling blocks to becoming a good reader (NRC Report, 1998)

1. Difficulty learning to read words accurately and fluently

2. Insufficient vocabulary, general knowledge, and reasoning skills to support comprehension of written language

3. Absence or loss of initial motivation to read, or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading.
The Many Strands that are Woven into Skilled Reading
(Scarborough, 2001)

**LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION**
- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

**WORD RECOGNITION**
- Phon. Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Skilled Reading—fluent coordination of word reading and comprehension processes

Increasingly automatic

Increasingly strategic

Reading is a multifaceted skill, gradually acquired over years of instruction and practice.
Two definitions of reading that summarize the challenges we face in helping students become proficient readers from 3\textsuperscript{rd} to 10\textsuperscript{th} grade

“Reading is translating between oral and written language.” (Perfetti, 1985)

“Reading is thinking guided by print.” (Perfetti, 1985)
Percentile ranks for reading fluency and knowledge/reasoning of students in 3rd, 7th, and 10th grade who perform at different levels on the FCAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FCAT Level</th>
<th>3rd Flu.</th>
<th>3rd Kn/R</th>
<th>7th Flu.</th>
<th>7th Kn/R</th>
<th>10th Flu.</th>
<th>10th Kn/R</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>
The facts:

1. The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to enable children to read fluently with good comprehension.

2. Three basic problems create most of the reading difficulties our students experience.

3. The longer a child remains a poor reader, the harder it is to “catch up” with grade level standards.
The consequences of early and continuing reading difficulties

Lack of reading practice - affects fluency

Lack of wide reading - affects growth of vocabulary and knowledge of the world

Lack of wide reading - affects growth of strategic reading skills

Limited reading of classroom assignments - affects growth of essential knowledge

Loss of interest in reading and learning
Teaching Reading is Urgent

A student at the 10th percentile reads about 60,000 words a year in 5th grade.

A student at the 50th percentile reads about 900,000 words a year in 5th grade.

Average students receive about 15 times as much practice in a year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Minutes Per Day</th>
<th>Words Read Per Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>33.4</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Anderson, R. C., 1992)
Consequences of reading difficulties: an ever widening gap

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

The gap increases in both depth and breadth
The facts (cont.):

4. Each year, the knowledge and skill required to achieve grade level standards in reading increases.
Each year skills and knowledge required to meet standards increases. Must learn to recognize many new words automatically.
Correct Words per Minute on Grade Level Text

6th Grade  7th Grade  8th Grade
FW  S  FW  S  FW  S

23 WPM  22 WPM  18 WPM

Tindal, Hasbrouck, & Jones, 2005
The Fluency Challenge.....

“One of the great mysteries to challenge researchers is how people learn to read and comprehend text rapidly and with ease. A large part of the explanation lies in how they learn to read individual words. Skilled readers are able to look at thousands of words and immediately recognize their meanings without any effort.”

Each year skills and knowledge required to meet standards increases

- Must acquire many new vocabulary words
- Must learn to deal with longer sentences and more complex ideas
- Must be able to draw upon more extensive background knowledge
- Must learn to recognize many new words automatically
The increasing yearly standards of the FCAT require strong instruction to maintain “average” reading growth.
The facts (cont.):

4. Each year, the knowledge and skill required to achieve grade level standards in reading increases.

5. Children are enormously diverse in their talent and preparation for learning to read.
Diversity creates special difficulties for teachers and schools.

A central problem in reading instruction arises, not from the absolute level of children’s preparation for learning to read, but from the diversity in their levels of preparation.

(Olson, 1998)
What are the most important ways children are diverse—when it comes to learning to read?

1. They are diverse in their talent and their preparation for learning to read words accurately and fluently.

2. They are diverse in their oral language knowledge and abilities—vocabulary and world knowledge.

3. They are diverse in their abilities to manage their learning behaviors and their motivation to apply themselves to learning to read.
Diversity increases with development

Depth
Breadth

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th
The implications:

1. We must offer systematic and explicit instruction in the essential elements of reading skill and knowledge
   - Direct explanations and modeling
   - Systematically organized
   - Focused on essential skills and knowledge
   - Leaves nothing to chance
   - Requires more teacher knowledge
The implications:

1. We must offer systematic and explicit instruction in the essential elements of reading skill and knowledge

2. We must offer multiple “strands” or “tiers” of instruction at every grade level
The need for multiple tiers of instruction

Core reading program

Powerful intervention instruction

1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th
Three Tiers or Multiple Tiers?

Ways that instruction must be made more powerful for students “at-risk” for reading difficulties.

**More powerful instruction involves:**

- More instructional time
- Smaller instructional groups
- Clearer and more detailed explanations
- More systematic instructional sequences
- More extensive opportunities for guided practice
- More opportunities for error correction and feedback
- More skillful orchestration and integration of all elements
The implications:

1. We must offer systematic and explicit instruction in the essential elements of reading skill and knowledge.

2. We must offer multiple “strands” or “tiers” of instruction at every grade level.

3. The need for a school level system that supports growth for grade level students and identifies and intervenes powerfully with struggling readers.
Three critical elements of school level systems to teach all students to read well

1. High quality core classroom instruction that supports growth of grade level skills

2. Timely and valid assessments that identify struggling readers and monitor their progress in “closing the gap”

3. Multiple tiers of intervention to meet the huge diversity of talent and preparation for learning to read
Core instruction changes with developmental level

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- Phonics and other word reading strategies
- Acquisition of Fluency
- Development of Vocabulary, Knowledge and Thinking Skills
- Development of attitudes——motivation, interest, curiosity
The challenge for middle and high schools

1. Content area teachers must systematically teach and reinforce active thinking about text in their domains.

2. Content area teachers must teach content knowledge in a way that everyone masters the most important ideas - content enhancement routines.
A way to remember the importance of powerful teaching of knowledge in the content areas so that even students with reading difficulties can understand the big ideas and learn the most essential content.

“Give me a fish while you’re teaching me how to catch my own...

That way I won’t starve to death while I’m learning to tie flies.”
Critical instructional focus at each level

**Middle school**

Content area teachers must systematically teach and reinforce active thinking about text in their domains.

Content area teachers must teach content knowledge in a way that everyone masters the most important ideas.

Strong motivational contexts in the classroom.

Intensive interventions must be available for those lagging behind in reading development.
Thank you

www.fcrr.org

Science of reading