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# *Teaching Children in Mother Tongues: Understanding Written Text*

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# Objectives

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For participants to:

- Understand why comprehension is taught orally to beginning readers
- Read Alouds
  - Know how to plan a scope and sequence for read-alouds while students are learning to decode
  - Understand how to develop purposeful instruction with read-alouds



# The Simple View of Reading

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- Important research to inform early reading instruction; a formula:

$$\text{Decoding} \times \text{Language Comprehension} = \text{Reading Comprehension}$$

- Decoding is the ability to read familiar and unfamiliar words accurately
- Language comprehension is the ability to understand oral or written language
- Reading comprehension requires both

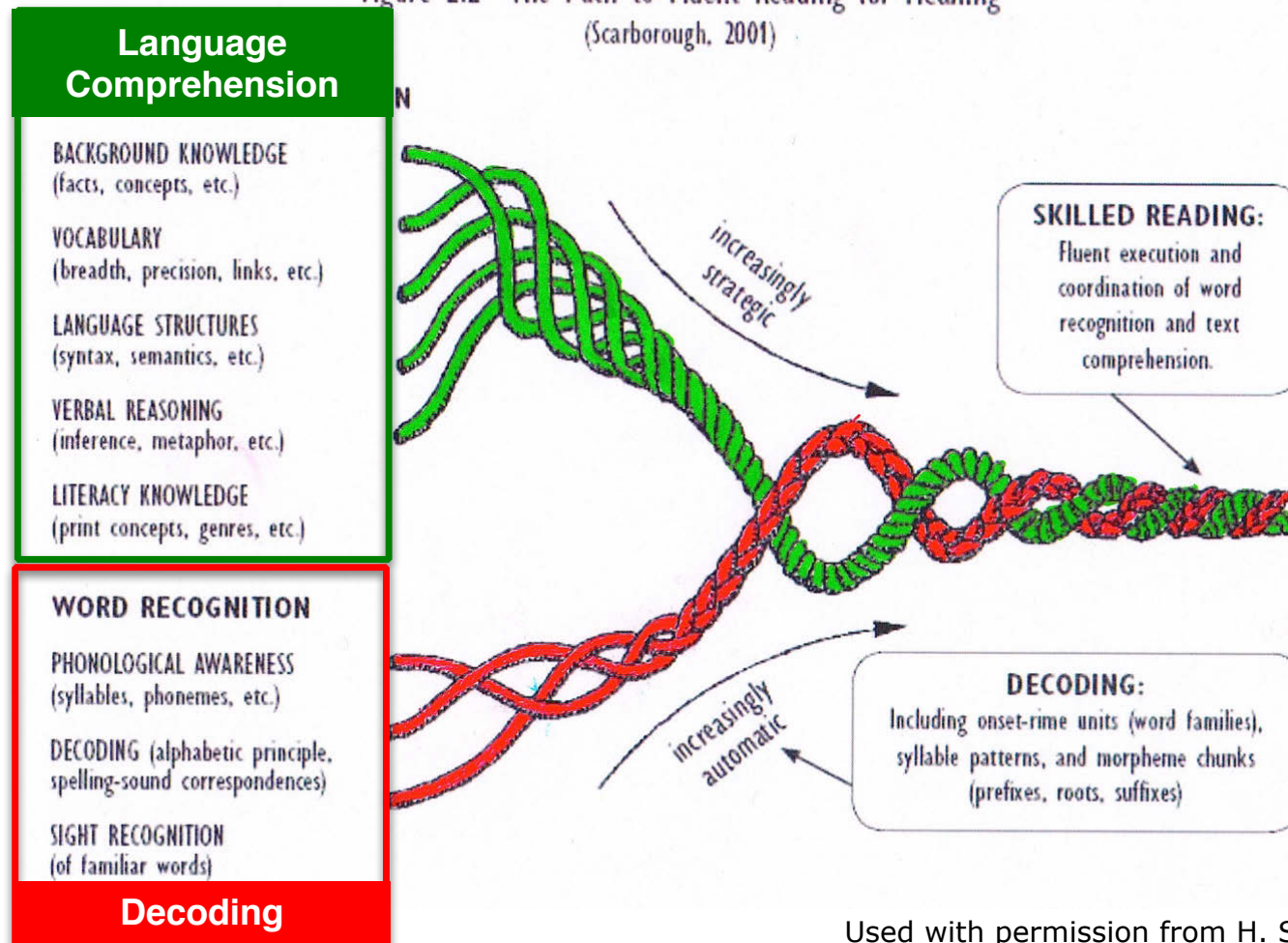
# The Simple View of Reading and Early Reading Instruction

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1. Before children know how to decode, language comprehension and listening comprehension are the same thing
2. We need to *teach* beginning readers to:
  - decode - read words and sentences accurately
  - AND
  - understand - know what the words and sentences mean

# Teach Decoding and Listening Comprehension **Separately** until Children Learn to Decode

Figure 2.2 The Path to Fluent Reading for Meaning  
(Scarborough, 2001)



Used with permission from H. Scarborough

# How to Teach Decoding and Listening Comprehension Separately

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Until students can decode familiar and unfamiliar words accurately:

- Decoding instruction should be with 100% decodable materials
  - Questions asked after students read decodable materials are simple and just to remind students we read for meaning
- Comprehension should be taught through oral activities with more complex text that challenges them to think and learn

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## Read Alouds



# Read-Alouds: An Effective Way to Teach Listening Comprehension

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- Read-alouds are texts that teachers read *to* students
  - Students do not read the texts
  - Students do not need copies of the texts
- As students are learning to decode in one part of the lesson, read-alouds are used for listening comprehension instruction in another part of the lesson

# Challenges for Using Read-Alouds

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1. Identify topics to address
2. Finding appropriate materials
3. Developing interactive questions
4. Having everyone understand that students do *not* read the texts
5. Teacher's comfort with reading aloud in the mother tongue



## Challenge 1

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Identifying topics to address

# How to Plan a Scope and Sequence for Read-Alouds

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- Include both informational texts and stories to expose students to the elements and structures of both genres
- Determine appropriate subjects for informational texts and story elements to be taught
  - Align themes with national curriculum as much as possible
- Texts should have vocabulary and sentence structure slightly above the children's existing language level
  - Texts should not be only about what children already know

# Identifying Subject Matter

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- Determine themes for informational texts and for some stories
  - For example: “animals”, “jobs”, “the sky”, “weather”, “the market”
- Determine structural elements for stories
  - For example: “characters”, “setting”, “what happened first, next, and last”, “problem and resolution”



## Challenge 2

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# Finding appropriate materials

# Finding Texts

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- Review existing texts in the language of instruction and determine if they are appropriate for instruction both in topic and complexity
  - Can the text be adapted for complexity?
- Write texts if not enough existing texts can be found for identified subject matter
  - These can be new texts or translations of existing texts

# Selecting Texts

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- The primary goals of read-alouds are for students to:
  1. Listen to more formal language than they speak
    - Written text is always more formal and complex than spoken language
  2. Understand story structure
  3. Build vocabulary and knowledge base
  4. Learn life lessons
- If a text cannot be used to teach at least two of the above, it should not be selected
  - We need to make the most of limited instructional time



# Pictures

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- Pictures can add to read-alouds, but are not necessary
  - Children and adults have been enraptured by stories without pictures for thousands of years
- Use pictures for a purpose
  - A picture of an ocean or river can help students in dry areas understand the meaning
  - A picture of something thick and thin can help children understand the meaning and comparison
- Color pictures are expensive, and most of the time black and white pictures are just as effective



## Challenge 3

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# Developing interactive questions

# Well Designed Questions Keep Students Engaged

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- Provide instructional scripts for teachers to use, with questions specific to each text
- The scripts will include:
  - Vocabulary words to teach before reading and to review after reading
  - What to tell students about the text before they hear it
  - Questions to ask before, during, and after reading the text

# Examples of Before, During, and After Questions

<b>Story about a Shepherd</b>	<b>Informational about the Moon</b>
<p><u>Before</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What does a shepherd do?</li></ul> <p><u>During</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why did the shepherd hesitate before leaving?</li></ul> <p><u>After</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What happened first, next, last in the story?</li><li>- Why did the shepherd cry at the end of the story?</li></ul>	<p><u>Before</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What do you see in the sky at night?</li></ul> <p><u>During</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why don't we see the moon at night when the sky is cloudy?</li></ul> <p><u>After</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What makes the moon shine?</li><li>- What is one new thing you learned?</li></ul>



## Challenge 4

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Having everyone understand that only the teacher, not students, reads the text

# Only the Teacher Reads the Story

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For many teachers, reading a text TO children, NOT WITH them, is a new concept and difficult to understand

- Make it clear during teacher training that the teacher reads the text and the children listen
- Demonstrate and practice a read-aloud during teacher training
- Include clear directions in the teacher guide about how to conduct each read-aloud



## Challenge 5

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Teachers' discomfort with reading aloud in the mother tongue

# Teachers' Discomfort with Reading Aloud in Mother Tongue

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- Almost all teachers are uncomfortable reading aloud in mother tongue
  - Because of a lack of reading materials in mother tongue, not many teachers have much experience reading aloud
- Assure pedagogical advisors and teachers that the teachers will become proficient as they practice reading
- Include substantial time during training for teachers to practice reading aloud with one another



# Summary

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- Comprehension is taught orally, not through reading, as children are learning to decode
- Use read-aloud texts that are slightly higher level than children's existing language level
- Plan a scope and sequence of themes with new information you want children to learn—tied to national curriculum if possible
- Script purposeful questions for before, during, and after read-alouds
- Provide ample practice during training for teachers to practice reading in the mother tongue

# References

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# Thank you

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