

# Shifting the lens from decoding to language comprehension: Evidence based methods to support pupils understanding of text



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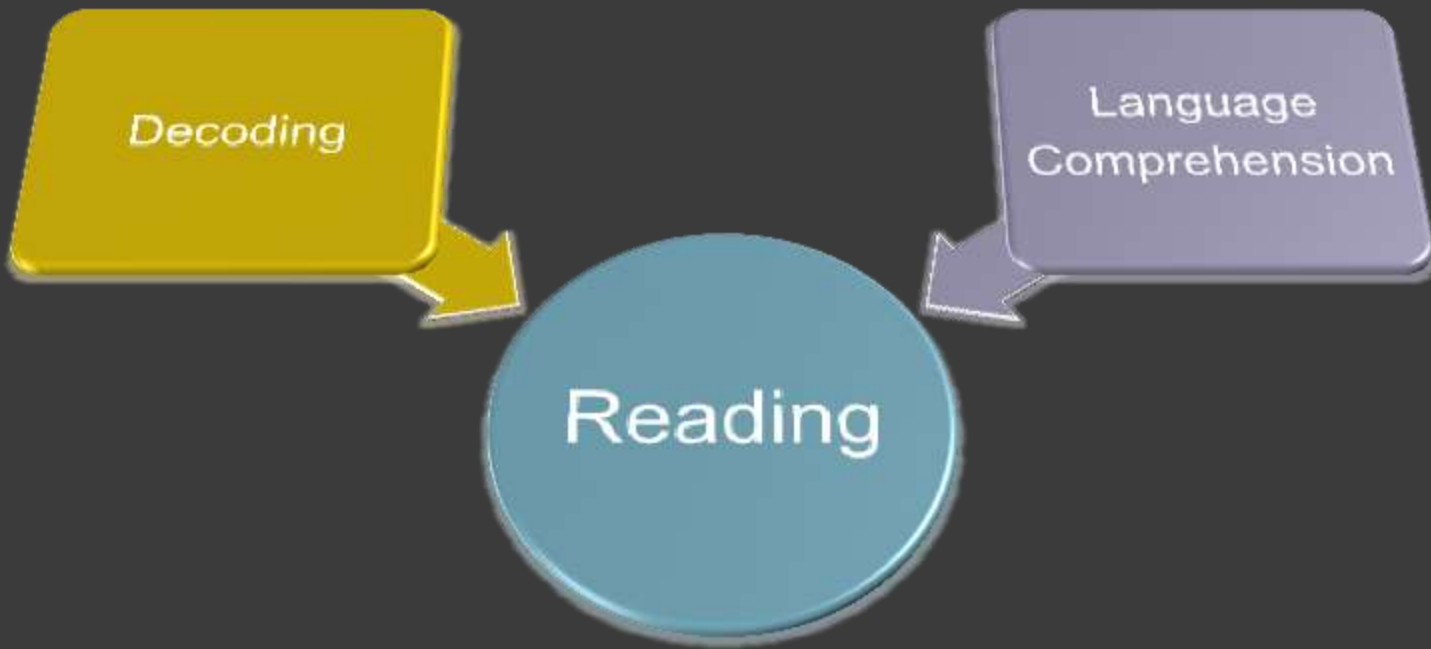
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# Outline

- Theories of reading success
- Skills and processes involved in successful reading
- Evidence based approaches to support text comprehension

# Simple view of reading



Successful Reading = Reading for Meaning

# Textbase

**Linguistic** Recognising and processing the meaning of individual vocabulary in the text



**Microstructure** Goes beyond the single word level to form a meaningful representation of connected text – using knowledge of grammar



**Macrostructure** Organising the microstructure into global themes and topics – ‘extracting the gist’

Represents the meaning of the text derived only from information expressed by the text



# General knowledge

- ◉ Reader's own background knowledge and personal experiences drawn on to form a personal representation of what has been read, a situation model of the text
- ◉ Reader actively constructs this representation



# Situation model

**Textbase**



**General knowledge**



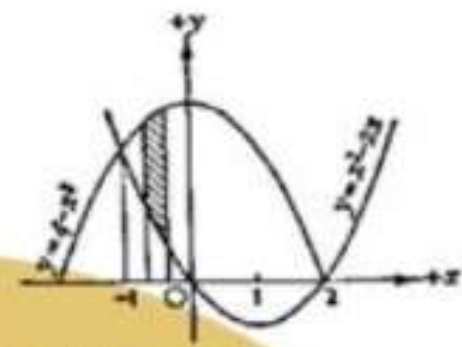
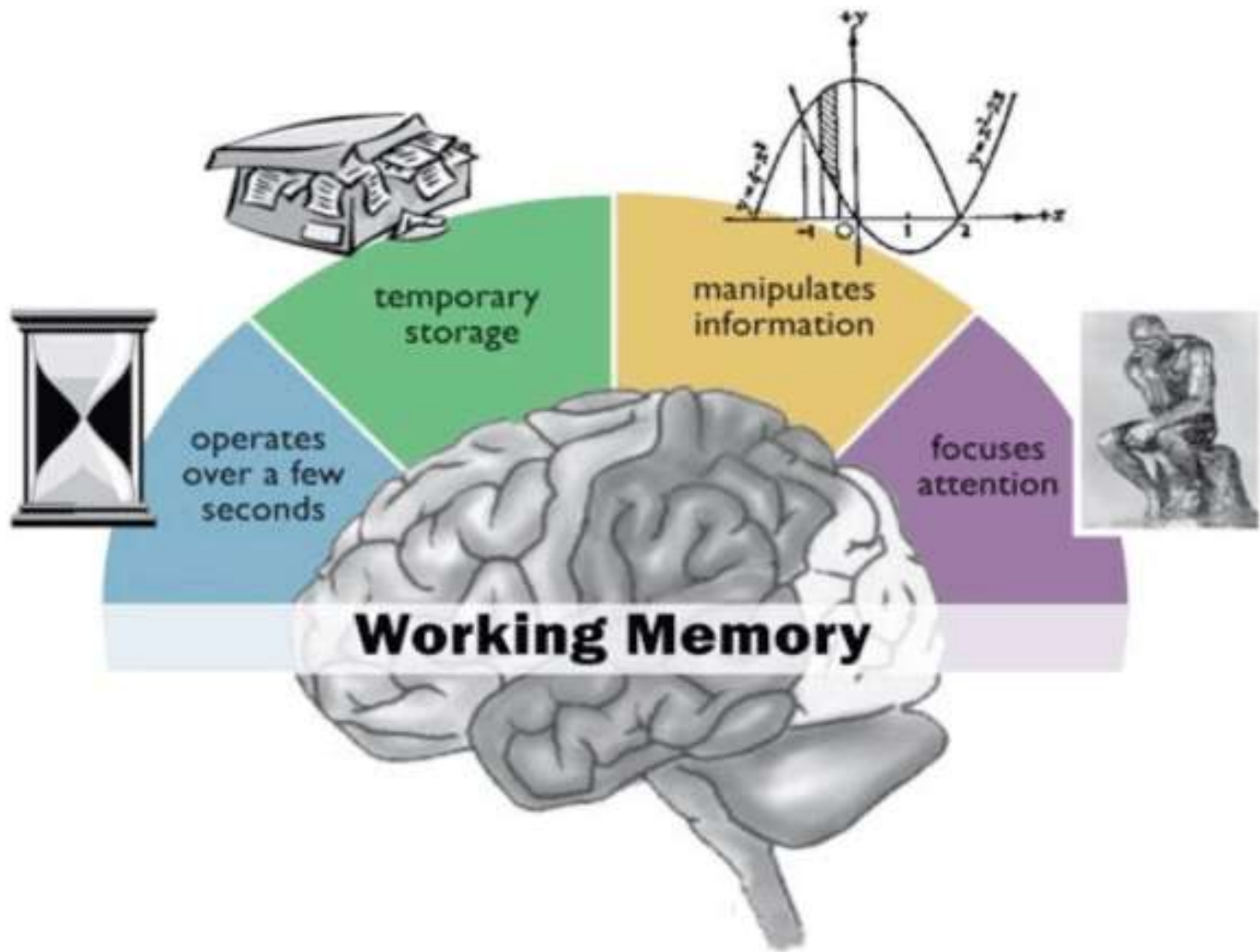
**Situation model**

For successful comprehension the reader must go beyond the textbase to incorporate general knowledge to reach a personal and emotional interpretation

# Constructing the model

- ⦿ Working memory
- ⦿ Inference
- ⦿ Theory of mind
- ⦿ Standards of coherence
- ⦿ Metacognition
- ⦿ Contextual factors







# Inference processes

“The situation model for a literary text may require construction at more than one level of analysis; to understand a story; the reader may have to infer the protagonists’ motivations; to understand an argument, the exact relations between its components may have to be analyzed.”

(Kintsch & Rawson, 2005, pp.221).

# Necessary Inferences

- ◎ **Coherence** – Knowledge Based:

- Peter pedalled hard but could not make it to the top of the hill.
- What was Peter riding?

- ◎ **Cohesive** – Text Based:

- Tom hit Janet with his tennis racket.
- Who did the tennis racket belong to?

# Enrich representation of text

- ◎ Elaborative (knowledge based):
  - Jack was not feeling well. He had a headache and a sore throat. He lay in bed and called for his mum.
  - What will probably happen next?



# Theory of mind

- ⦿ The ability to understand other people's behaviour, to predict relationships between external states of affairs and internal states of mind.
- ⦿ This involves implicit attribution of thoughts, wishes, feelings & beliefs.
- ⦿ Theory of mind is needed to recognize and understand authors perspectives and intended meaning.



# Standards of coherence

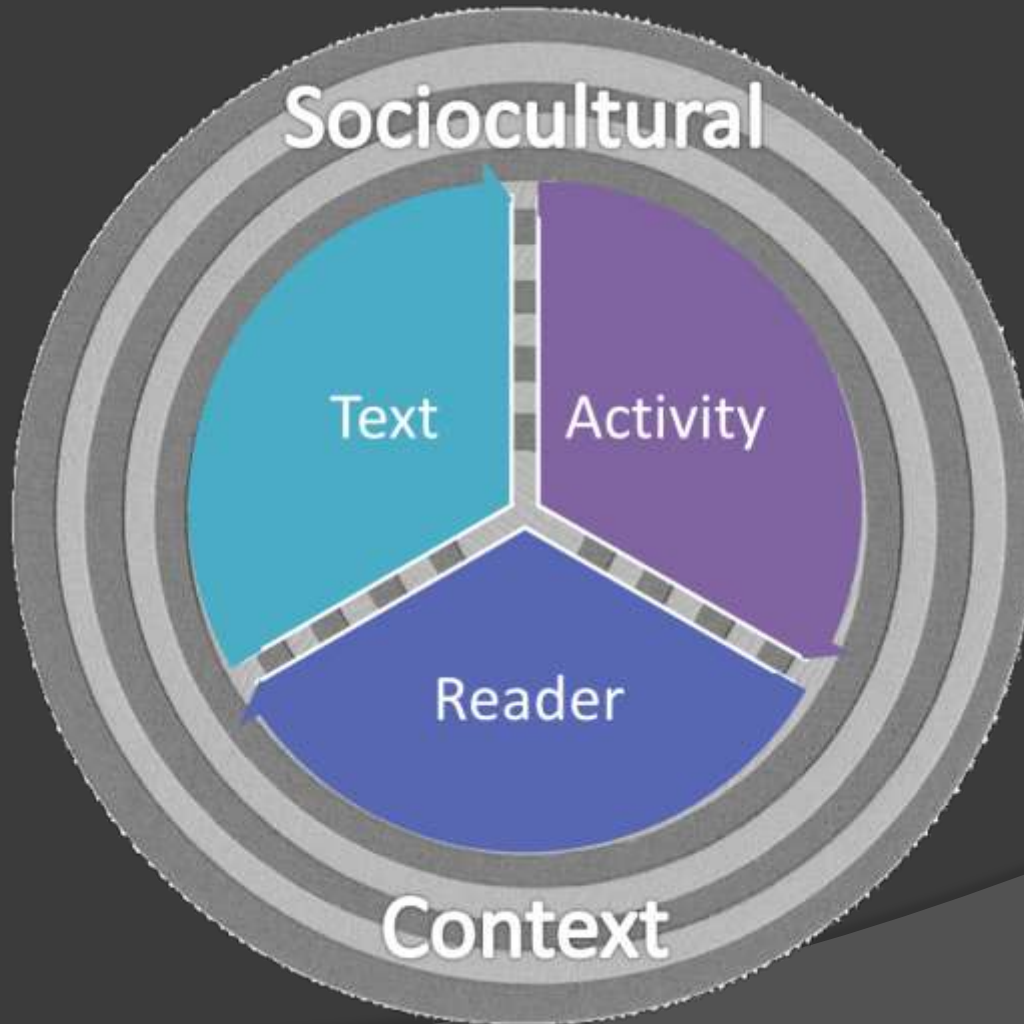
- Perfetti, Landi & Oakhill (2005)
- “...a standard of coherence broadly determines the extent to which a reader will read for understanding, make inferences, and monitor his or her own comprehension.” (pp.233)
- For reading comprehension to develop, a high standard of coherence is necessary.



# Metacognition



# Contextual factors



“Comprehension is greater than the sum of its perceptual and conceptual parts” (Caccamise and Synder, 2005, pg.10) (Cited in Cain 2010)





# Theory → Intervention

- ⦿ Support the development of textbase but also promote:
  - Links to wider background knowledge and personal experience
  - The development language comprehension skills more broadly
  - Metacognitive skills
- ⦿ Multi componential packages needed to reflect the complexity of reading comprehension

# Clarke, Snowling, Truelove & Hulme (2010; 2013)

## Oral Language Programme

Vocabulary  
Listening Comprehension  
Figurative Language  
Spoken Narrative

## Text Comprehension Programme

Metacognitive Strategies  
Reading Comprehension  
Inferencing from Text  
Written Narrative

## Combined Programme

All eight components connecting oral language and text-based activities in an integrated and naturalistic approach.

All sessions contained both reading and listening comprehension to support complementary components.

Opportunities for children to encounter new vocabulary/idioms/inferences in both written and spoken language.

# Clarke, Paul, Smith, Snowling & Hulme (2017)

REACH RI+C Comprehension session structure	
2.5 mins	INTRODUCTION
10 mins	VOCABULARY <i>'WORD OF THE DAY'</i>
10 mins	LISTENING <i>USING RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGIES</i>
5 mins	FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
5 mins	NARRATIVE
2.5 mins	PLENARY

# Effective Strategies

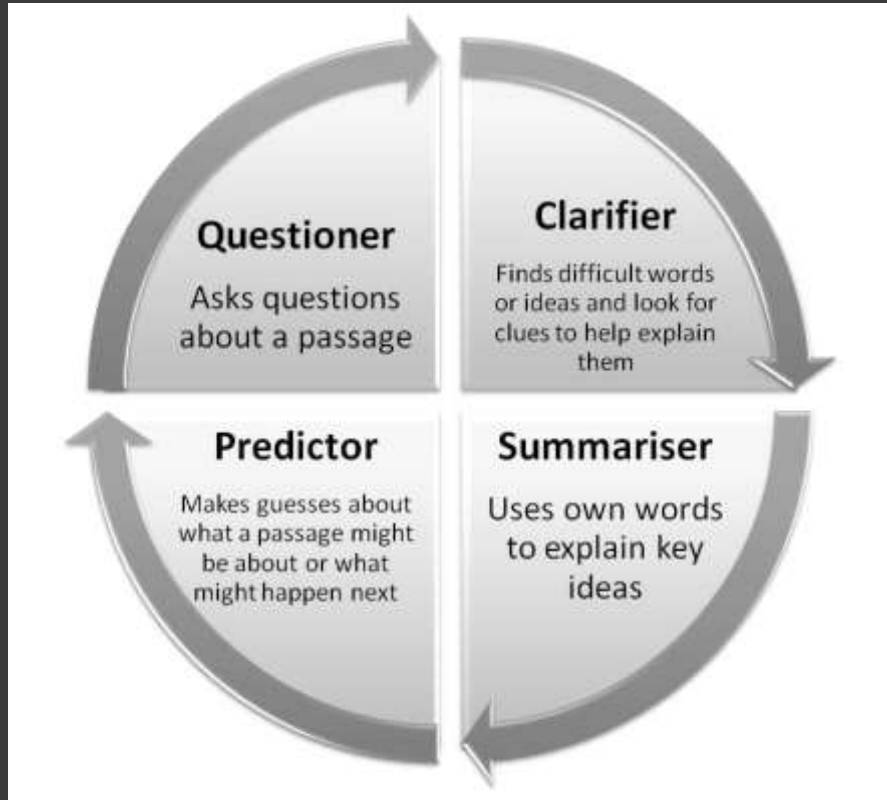
- ⦿ National Reading Panel (2000) reviewed 205 studies and identified seven effective comprehension strategies.
- ⦿ They suggested that whilst some of these types of instruction are helpful when used alone, many are more effective when used as part of a multiple-strategy method.
- ⦿ <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/nrp/Pages/findings.aspx>

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Description</b>
Comprehension monitoring	where readers learn how to be aware of their understanding of the material
Cooperative learning	where students learn reading strategies together
Use of graphic and semantic organizers (including story maps)	where readers make graphic representations of the material to assist comprehension
Question answering	where readers answer questions posed by the teacher and receive immediate feedback
Question generation	where readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story
Story structure	where students are taught to use the structure of the story as a means of helping them recall story content in order to answer questions about what they have read
Summarization	where readers are taught to integrate ideas and generalize from the text information

# Reciprocal Teaching

- (also Reciprocal Reading)
- Developed by Palincsar & Brown (1984)
- “Of all the approaches to strategy instruction that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, none has had more direct impact than Reciprocal Teaching” (pg. 21, Pearson, 2009)

# Reciprocal teaching



Connectors reading scheme

<https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/connectors>

<https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/resources/77520>

Tutor  $\longleftrightarrow$  Learners

Scaffolding reduces and roles swap

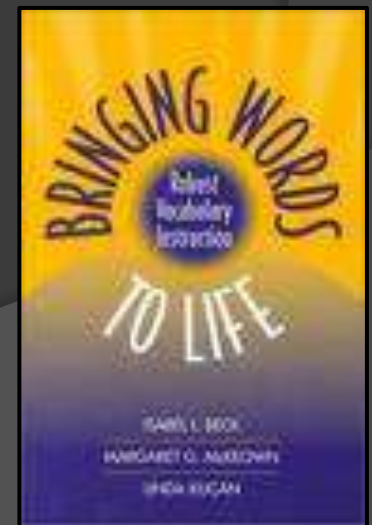
# Effective Strategies

- ⦿ National Reading Panel (2000) also reviewed 50 studies designed to improve reading comprehension through vocabulary instruction.
- ⦿ The recommendations were:
  - vocabulary should be taught both directly and indirectly
  - repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items are important
  - learning in rich contexts, incidental learning, and use of computer technology all enhance the acquisition of vocabulary
  - direct instruction should include task restructuring as necessary and should actively engage the student
  - dependence on a single vocabulary instruction method will not result in optimal learning
- ⦿ <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/nrp/Pages/findings.aspx>

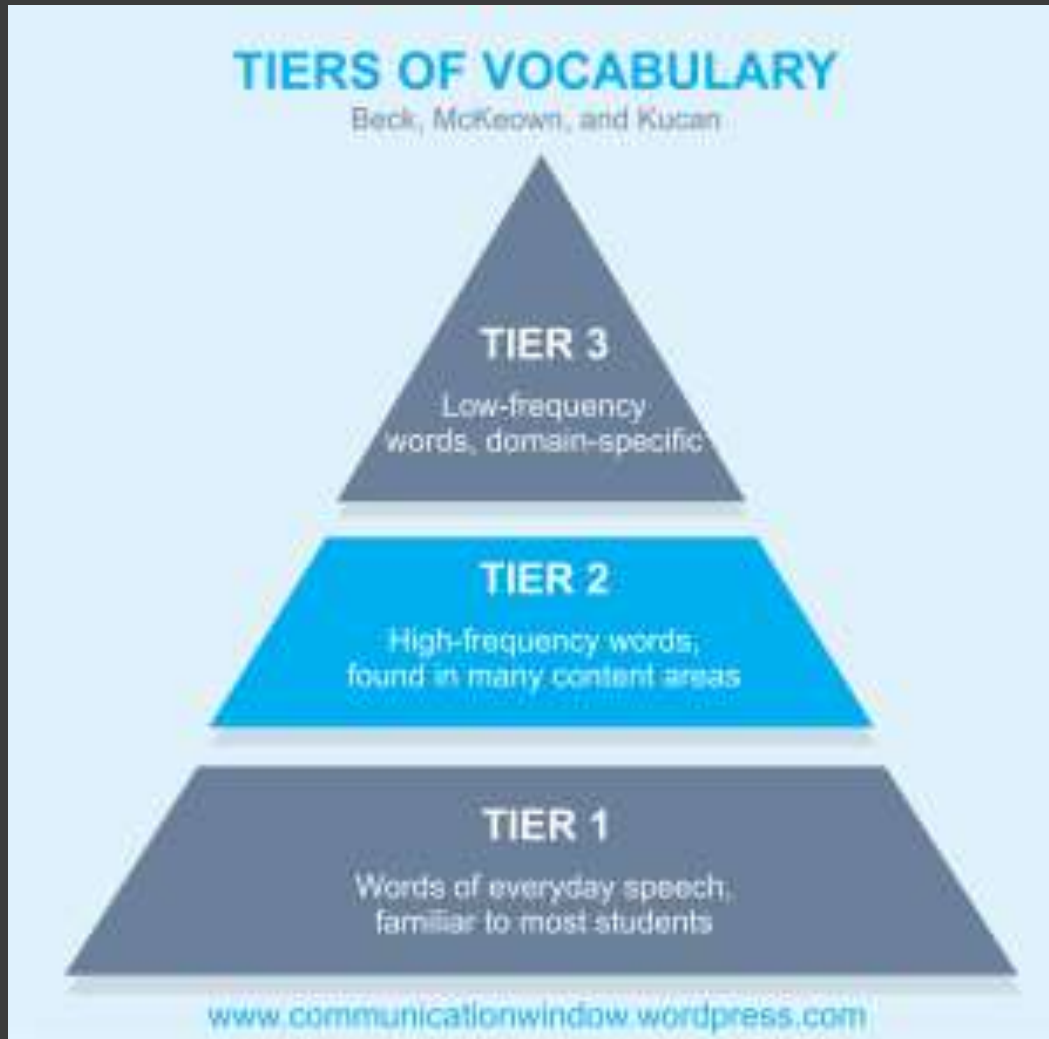


# Robust vocabulary instruction

- Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002)
- Peer collaboration
- Linking words to own experiences and those of others
- Direct teaching of Tier 2 words



# Tier 2 words



## Examples:



benefit

prevent

inform

permit

repel

apprentice

transaction

magnificent

publicity

commotion

plunge

contribute

apprehensive

cascade

triumph

convince

conceal

admire

experiment

# Four component approach

- Graves (2006) proposes the following:

Providing rich and varied  
language experiences

Fostering word  
consciousness



Teaching  
individual words

Teaching word  
learning strategies

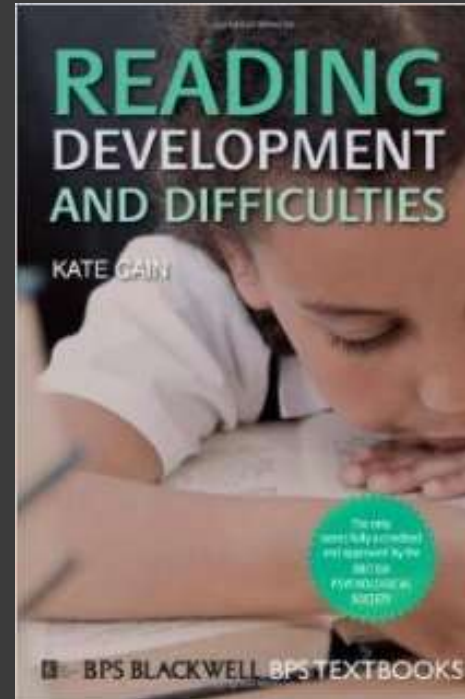
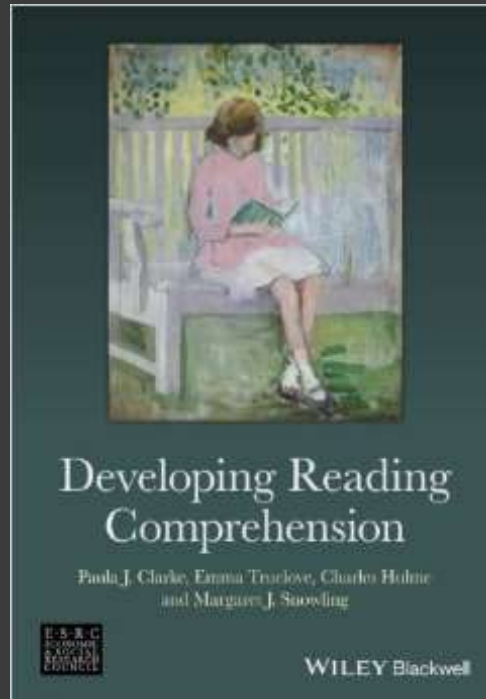
# Evidence → Practice

- ◎ Best evidence encyclopaedia - <http://www.bestevidence.org/index.cfm>
- ◎ What works for pupils with literacy difficulties - <http://www.interventionsforliteracy.org.uk/interventions/>
- ◎ Teaching and learning toolkit - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/toolkit-a-z/>
- ◎ Communication trust, what works - <http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/whatworks>

# Final thoughts

- ⦿ When we read we seldom pay attention to the incredibly complex thought processes that contribute to our ability to understand text.
- ⦿ For some children who have difficulties with reading comprehension extracting meaning from text is highly effortful. These children can go unnoticed in a busy classroom.
- ⦿ Multicomponent interventions which include strategy based instruction and peer collaboration have been shown to be effective in improving reading comprehension skills.

# Recommended Reading



- For full reference list please email me [p.j.clarke@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.clarke@leeds.ac.uk)

# Thank you for listening!

If you are interested in further study then please consider the following courses offered in the School of Education at the University of Leeds:

- [MA Special Educational Needs](#)
- [PGCert Provision for Children with Developmental Disorders](#)
- [Doctor of Philosophy](#) (PhD)
- [Doctor of Education](#) (EdD)

