



The Skills of Reading

Learning to read is a very complex task.

Reading Research indicates that successful readers combine their knowledge of Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency and Comprehension.

To achieve competency we can break down the skills needed to learn to read into three different though connected skills. They are:

- decoding,
- sight word knowledge and
- comprehension

Decoding is as the word suggests the ability to ‘break the code’ of phonics and phonemic awareness. The student needs to:

1. be able to break words into separate sounds.(Phonemic Awareness)
2. recognise that letters are connected to sounds (Phonics).
3. blend the sounds to make a word.

As students’ knowledge of phonics develops they are able to decode more complex words.

Sight Words are words that need to be recognised within 2 seconds. This ability assists student to read fluently. Sight words fall into two categories – those that are phonetic and those that cannot be sounded out eg ‘was’, ‘said’. Non-phonetic sight words are a major stumbling block struggling readers, many of whom do not have a visual memory. These words need constant practice and revision to become instantly recognised. As a student builds an increasing bank of known sight words, fluency is improved we notice an improvement in reading levels.

Comprehension is all about understanding. If we can decode a text but not understand it we are not reading. Comprehension brings together all the skills of reading and our background experiences – including our understanding of words (Vocabulary). This is why it is so important to read to younger children.

Before Reading

- Predict – talk about the title and front cover. Ask “What do you think this story is about?”
- “Look through the book and discuss the pictures – **Pictures are there to assist decoding and comprehension**

During Reading

- Discuss unknown words or new concepts – **Connect with the illustrations**
- Think about what will happen next?

After Reading

- Talk about your favourite part
- What was the problem? – How was it solved?
- How the characters acted.

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