Decodable Texts in Phonics

Connected Texts to Build Automaticity

Today’s Objectives

- Connect the use of decodable texts to the development of automaticity with word recognition.
- Learn how decodable texts fit as a component of explicit and systematic phonics instruction.
- Recognize the role of both decodable texts and grade level rich texts in comprehensive literacy instruction.

Why Use Decodable Texts?

- Connect the use of decodable texts to the development of automaticity with word recognition.

What is a Decodable Text?

- Highly controlled vocabulary
- High frequency words that have been taught
- Focus on a new phonics pattern
- May have some words with phonics patterns previously taught
- Scope and sequence of spelling patterns
Benefits of Connected Decodable Texts

- Increase Accuracy of Reading
- Build Comprehension
- Provide Practice Opportunities
- Lead to Fluent and Automatic Reading

Goal: Fluent & Automatic Reading for Comprehension

- Print Concepts
- Phonics and Word Recognition
- Phonological Awareness
- Word Knowledge

Fluency is the Link

- Decoding / Word Recognition
- Fluency
- Comprehension

When To Use Decodable Texts

Decodable texts are appropriate at certain times, for direct practice of isolated phonics skills in connected texts.

- Phonics Instruction (Word Recognition)
- Based on Ehri’s Phases of Word Recognition – Prealphabetic, Later Alphabetic

References:
Hasbrouck and Houg, 2020 in Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment Prek – 6.
The texts we choose play a major role in training the brain and developing reading habits.

When we use **decodable texts**, we train the brain in the good habit of using our knowledge of letters and sounds to decode words resulting in accurate reading.
“It’s just common sense that kids need to practice the transfer of what we teach them to the words they are reading in a text. Decodable text quickly become quite meaningful and less stilted as kids learn basic phonics and some high frequency irregular words. Using decodable (text) for practice does not prohibit or prevent teachers from exposing kids to lots of other printed words (and texts) as long as kids are not expected to read them independently.”
- Louisa Moats

“Decodability is a critical characteristic of early reading text…it increases the likelihood that students will use a decoding strategy and results in immediate benefits, particularly in regard to accuracy.”
- Cheatham & Allor, 2012

Practice Makes Automatic
Think about learning a new skill…

What is the level of the practice?

I teach single digit addition…

I practice…

3 + 2 = 5

\[
\begin{array}{c}
3 \\
+ 2 \\
5
\end{array}
\]

3 + 2 = 5

\[
\begin{array}{c}
3 \\
+ 2 \\
5
\end{array}
\]
Practice Makes Automatic

So Why Use Decodable Texts?
- Aligned with the scope and sequence of the phonics instruction.
- Connected to the content being taught.
- Only contain patterns and HFW that have been taught.
- Allows for explicit teaching and then practice of the skill.

So Why Use Decodable Texts?

Resources to Watch and Share – Decoding and Word Recognition

Spelfabet Why Use Decodable Texts Over Predictable Texts?
If all children were taught phonics this way, as many as 95% would become proficient decoders. This includes many children who are diagnosed as dyslexic, along with many garden variety struggling readers, many of whom are from low-income families.

- Natalie Wexler, The Knowledge Gap, pg. 46

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How To Use Decodable Texts

Learn how decodable texts fit as a component of explicit and systematic phonics instruction.

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Explicit, Systematic Phonics Instruction

1. A well defined scope and sequence of phonics skills is taught starting with the easiest skills and building to more complex skills.
2. Each skill is taught directly without any assumption that the student will learn the skill on his/her own.
3. Students practice skills to mastery before learning the next skill.
4. Cumulative skill practice is included in the lesson progression

Linda Farrell, Plain Talk 2019

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Phonics Interventions – Must Haves

- Scope and Sequence
- Teaches: Letters & Sounds, Graphemes, Syllables, morphemes
- Connects to word meanings
- Uses connected decodable text
- Dictation
- Blending Drills
- Explicit Instruction (I do, we do, you do)
- Practice to mastery and fluency

Blevins, A Fresh Look at Phonics
Example of Systematic & Explicit Instruction

Focus on sound-spellings

Blend and read words with sound-spelling pattern

Read and write words, phrases, and sentences with sound-spelling pattern

Read decodable text with sound-spelling pattern

Resources to Watch and Share – Decoding and Word Recognition

ODE RIMP Code Videos

Explicit Intervention in Decoding

- Intervention focus for phonics uses data from an informal phonics decoding survey to determine the highest level of decoding skills mastered and teach the next skills in the progression.
- Use of connected text (decodable readers) is critical to developing phonics skills
One Process to Use Decodable Texts

1. Guide students to highlight the targeted pattern words in the text.
2. Have students read only the highlighted words so that they practice the words in isolation before reading whole sentences.
3. Have students read the whole passage using their highlighted copy.
4. Give students a clean copy of the text (with no highlighting) and have them read the whole passage.

Ways to Read Decodable Texts

- Echo Reading
- Choral Reading
- Read Aloud (one on one or small group)
- Whisper Reading
- AVOID Round Robin Reading

Read Like and Artist

- Use a paint brush to track.
- Build prosody, rate, and expression

Decodable Texts as a Component of Reading Instruction

Recognize the role of both decodable texts and grade level rich texts in comprehensive literacy instruction.
Multiple Text Approach

Decodable Texts
- Grade Level
  - Exposure to complex text with support.
  - Teacher scaffolding to give students access to text.
- Read Alouds
  - Dive into concepts beyond students' reading levels
  - Complex vocabulary and language structure
  - Build listening comprehension

Decodable: • Matches Phonics Sequence • Transfer skills to text, to build fluency, confidence, and automaticity

Grade Level: • Exposure to complex text with support.
• Teacher scaffolding to give students access to text.

The Simple View of Reading

Decodable
- Word Recognition
  - The ability to transform print into spoken language
- Language Comprehension
  - The ability to understand spoken language
- Decodable Texts

Grade Level
- Texts & Read Alouds

Grade Level Rich Texts Across Content Areas

Fluency is the Link

Decoding / Word Recognition → Fluency → Comprehension

Hasbrouck and Hougen, 2020 in Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction and Assessment PreK – 6.

Most of the time, the lowest rungs on a ladder are the best ones for learning to climb. I always hate to ask a child to jump to the top rungs without them.

- Maryanne Wolf, Reader Come Home, Quoting a Veteran Teacher
Questions or Comments?
Email Michelle Elia
Ohio Literacy Lead
Michelle.elia@sstr5.org

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