Decodable and Leveled Readers: Matching Text Types to Student Needs

Literacy Academy
March 18, 2019
Objectives

• Review the research behind how students learn to read
• Learn the difference between 3 different text types for beginning readers
• Match text types to readers based on their stage of development
• Learn a routine for using decodable text
Example

Four-Part Processing Model of Word Recognition

- **Context Processor**: concepts and information; sentence context; text structure
- **Meaning Processor**: vocabulary
- **Phonological Processor**: speech sound system; Language Input; Language Output
- **Orthographic Processor**: memory for letters; Reading Input; Writing Output

**Connections**:
- Context Processor to Meaning Processor
- Phonological Processor to Orthographic Processor
- Language Input to Phonological Processor
- Language Output to Orthographic Processor
- Reading Input to Orthographic Processor
- Writing Output to Orthographic Processor
Ehri’s Phases of Word-Reading Development

- Incidental visual cues
- Letter knowledge
- Partial phoneme awareness
- Early sight-word learning
- Phoneme-grapheme correspondence
- Complete phoneme awareness
- Reading fluently by sound, syllable, morpheme, whole word, families, and analogies

Phases:
- Prealphabetic
- Early Alphabetic
- Later Alphabetic
- Consolidated Alphabetic
Progression of skills needed for fluency

- Print Concepts
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics & Word Recognition
- Word Knowledge
- Fluency
Types of Text for Early Readers

- Leveled Text
- Predictable Text
- Decodable Text
The level of text is determined by

- Difficulty of vocabulary
- Difficulty of concepts
- Number of different words
- Size and type of font
The belief system behind leveled texts is that students learn by repeated exposures to words and that students should be able to figure out words using context and pictures.

Students often appear to be reading because they memorize the text. Often there is not carry over to new texts.
Ben has a mat.

Ben sat on his mat.
The crabs walk to the sea.  
There are crabs on the grass.  
There are crabs in the street.  
They have hard shells.  
They can pop tires.
• Basis for Whole Word Approach

Typical Classroom Practices
- Leveled text
- Repeated Readings
- Flash cards
- Shape outlines
- Writing spelling words 10x
- Rote repetition
• Shares many of the characteristics of leveled text.
• These texts can be highly engaging
• Often first books “read” by early readers
This is the house that Jack built.
This is the cheese that lay in the house that Jack built.
This is the rat that ate the cheese
That lay in the house that Jack built.
This is the cat that chased the rat
That ate the cheese that lay in the house that Jack built.

This is the dog that worried the cat
That chased the rat that ate the cheese
That lay in the house that Jack built.
This is the cow with the crumpled horn
That tossed the dog that worried the cat
That chased the rat that ate the cheese
That lay in the house that Jack built.
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
Sequence of Text

- Words (real and pseudo)
- Phrases
- Sentences
- Story
No Gas

Dad had a cab. The cab had no gas. Dad was mad.
Can the cab go? No, no, no!

Jan is sad. Jan can go find gas. The gas has tax. Dad will get gas in the gas cap. The cab has gas now. Can the cab go? Yes, yes, yes!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decodable Text</th>
<th>Leveled Readers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code-based</td>
<td>Meaning-based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes letter and sound combinations that students have been explicitly taught</td>
<td>Includes some patterns that students have been taught and some that have not been explicitly taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows a scope and sequence</td>
<td>Provides fluency practice for students who are accurate decoders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides the opportunity for accuracy and fluency</td>
<td>Prompting tends to promote memorizing whole words and guessing strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides more opportunities for success</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher prompts student to tap the sounds and map the sounds to the spelling pattern</td>
<td>“The cat sat on a lap.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I like to play at home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leveled Reader</strong></td>
<td><strong>Controlled Reader</strong></td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was time to take the books back to the library. “We had ten books, “said the teacher. “But now we have nine! We must find the lost book.”</td>
<td>Chuck the duck is sick. He has a chill and a bad neck. His back is bad and he can not quack. Zack and Mom get Chuck in to see the vet.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Prealphabetic → Early Alphabetic → Later Alphabetic → Consolidated Alphabetic
Routines

Day 1
• Highlight words with focus pattern
• Read highlighted words
• Read text chorally

Day 2
• Read text with highlighted words
• Read a clean copy of the text

Day 3
• With a new passage, highlight words with the focus pattern
• Read the whole passage

Day 4
• Read the same passage as Day 3 but with a clean copy

Day 5
• Read a new passage without highlighting
**Transfer to Text Process:**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passage 1</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Passage 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passage 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Read & Rereading Routines
Vary approaches to text reading

Several readings of the same text, using different text-reading procedures, help consolidate word recognition and support comprehension.

Partner reading – Explicitly teach how to:
• Decide who reads first
• What the partner does while other reads
  (e.g. put a dot under each word that is read)
• How to correct when an error is made
• What to do if partners finish before the rest of the class

When students have read the text two or more times, pair students, assign them roles of “reader” and “coach,” and ask the reader to retell the story to the coach. Then, reverse the roles so that each student has an opportunity to retell.
Consolidating Skills

• Have students write about the story using words with phonics pattern
• Ask comprehension questions about the story- identify the story grammar elements
• Have students reread previously read text.
Instruction should focus on reading words, not learning words.

If a child memorizes ten words, the child can only read ten words, but if the child learns ten sounds the child will be able to read 350 three sound words, 4,320 four sound words and 21,650 five sound words.
Resources

- West Virginia Phonics
- Bob Books
- Power Readers and SuperCharged Readers
- Reading A-Z (make sure to access the decodable readers)
- Core Reading programs have some decodable text but the key is knowing which texts are decodable and which are leveled.