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NOTE:

THE BOOK CLIMBING THE LADDER OF READING & WRITING: MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL LEARNERS (2024) EXPLAINS AND EXPANDS UPON THE INFOGRAPHIC'S FEATURES AND TERMINOLOGY. AN EXTENSIVE GLOSSARY IS AVAILABLE VIA THE QR CODE IN THE BOOK.

Defining the Terminology Used on Nancy Young's Infographic *The Ladder of Reading & Writing*© (2023)

Note: The research for this infographic is based primarily on the English language but much of the information within the following definitions applies to other alphabetic languages.

Acceleration: This term encompasses multiple ways to accelerate, including early entrance to kindergarten, skipping grade(s), and subject-area acceleration (learning with students in a higher grade)

Analytic:

- Entails a strategic approach to teaching the alphabetic principle (letters represent speech sounds) for those who have not yet acquired this principle
- Emphasizes that individual words (and word parts) and combined words (sentences/paragraphs) are made up of patterns forming written language that can be logically analyzed (recognizing that the detail of any linguistic analysis will vary with need)
- Encourages students to be metacognitive as they learn and apply strategies to decode/encode as well as identify units of meaning within individual words/ sentences (Hoover & Tunmer, 2020), bringing intellectual engagement into learning about the structure of language and encouraging individual understanding and awareness of progress

Code-based: Teaching that phonemes in spoken language correspond with graphemes in written language, also called the alphabetic principle. The process of teaching a student to decode (based on grapheme-phoneme correspondences) is in direct contrast to asking a student to guess a word by looking at a picture.

Comprehensive analytical approach: An umbrella term that encompasses the components of the English language that underpin reading and writing with fluency and comprehension, taught in ways that enable students to be metacognitive while learning about language structure.

Comprehensive:

- Encompasses components of language structure taught within approaches sometimes described as “structured literacy”, “the Big 5” and/or “5 Pillars”: phonics (phonology/orthography), vocabulary (semantics/morphology), syntax/writing
- Is a broad term (not one specific approach or program) that recognizes:



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- Foundational instruction entails an integrated approach addressing numerous components of language structure (not just phonics), the differentiation of content taught (what) and methods used (how) based on individual need
- Explicit instruction teaches a necessary skill or concept the student does not know and will vary in amount and form depending on what is needed to enable (“jumpstart”) implicit learning
- Exposure to varied forms of text is essential for many reasons (particularly statistical learning); Beginner readers or students with dyslexia may benefit from greater amounts of text aligned to instruction (decodable text) to jumpstart independent word-level reading ability
- Some children require greater emphasis on building background knowledge during literacy skill development
- Some children require support specifically addressing language challenges
- Growing awareness of the role of self-regulation in learning to read/write (see Duke & Cartwright, 2021) and benefits to inquiry-based approaches to learning language structure (see Bowers & Kirby, 2010).

The term “comprehensive” recognizes our understandings about how to best teach foundational skills continue to evolve and that research is ongoing.

Data-informed: This term signifies that information indicating skill acquisition underpins the provision of differentiated instruction. Data can be obtained from a variety of sources (e.g., basic screening, formal and informal assessment, and progress monitoring) to gauge skill mastery and instructional needs and the effectiveness of instruction or intervention. Data sources may also indicate initial readiness to learn (pre-k and k students), language skills (applicable to students learning a new language and to students with language delays in their mother language), and special needs (results of psycho-educational assessment). Data can be obtained from observation and parent input. CAUTION: Methods to measure skills of students not yet reading (or at the foundational stages) will be different from students who are already reading. Methods used to gather data about students in the dark green must be appropriate for students who are already reading. (Testing isolated phonemic awareness skills of students already decoding is not necessary and may generate inaccurate results.)

Differentiation: Instruction based on the need of each student to master certain content (WHAT needs to be taught) using a process (HOW) that aligns to their individual need. Some children require a more systematic and explicit approach during which skills are built in a cumulative manner yet other children require far less instruction and repetition – if any. Differentiated instruction based on need is essential to enable ALL students to progress. Inappropriate instruction (such as phonemic awareness or step-by-step phonics instruction for those who can already read) is likely to delay reading and writing development.

Environmental factors: This encompasses a child’s home literacy situation and background (including socio-economic situation), the language spoken in the child’s home, the dialect within the child’s spoken language at home and/or in a child’s community, the knowledge, skill-level, experience, and resources available to the child’s teachers, and aspects of the school itself.



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Explicit instruction: A step-by-step approach to teaching during which students receive clear explanations and demonstrations of a new skill or task followed by practice as needed. "Explicitness occurs on a continuum and can take a variety of forms" (Fletcher et al., 2019, p. 100).

Extended learning: Encompasses extended learning of content (e.g., deeper comprehension of more complex text) or enrichment (e.g., guided inquiry delving into a student's interest area).

Implicit learning: Learning that is ongoing and happens without conscious awareness; the opposite of explicit learning. Most learning – even the learning needed to read and write proficiently – happens through implicit learning. Children in the dark green generally learn to read implicitly, with no formal instruction; for other students, some explicit instruction enables the implicit learning process to happen (jumpstarts the process). For those with reading disabilities, much more explicit instruction is likely to be necessary.

Language structure:

- The structure that makes up the spoken and written English language.
- Is based on the alphabetic code (connects to the words "code-based").
- Learning of language structure entails understanding that:
 - The letters (orthographic structure) of a written word connect to the sounds (phonemes) heard.
 - Letters singly or combined can represent morphemes (units of meaning) within a word.
 - The writing of individual words and words combined in sentences and paragraphs, in varying forms of text, is based on established structural conventions.
 - Not every aspect of structure can be taught; understanding that language is based on a structure enables ongoing learning (see Share's self-teaching hypothesis explained by Five from Five) as analytical skills are developed/strengthened through a great deal of exposure to text (enabling statistical learning – see Treiman & Kessler, 2022).
- The process by which the structure of the code is learned encompasses attention to the meaning and use of the word(s) being analyzed, including features of language related to word origin, morphological components and how words combined to form text (e.g., sentence structure, narrative versus academic language, variations in disciplinary texts).

Spelling: The accurate representations of individual words in written text, sometimes described as encoding. Note that, although instruction is beneficial for many students, spelling skills will be developed/strengthened during the process of reading.

Systematically Designed: Instruction based on a consistent system of teaching (including the WHAT and HOW of planned skills or strategies will be taught, reviewed, and practiced). Systematic design applies to where a student is on the continuum of ease in learning to read, the pace of instruction and practice adjusted for the faster or a slower pace they require.



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Within-student factors: *Within-student* factors includes:

- Attentional disorders or challenges (may be undiagnosed)
- Psychological disorders or challenges (may be undiagnosed)
- Exceptionalities (e.g., dyslexia, specific reading comprehension disability, developmental language disorder, intellectual disability, intellectually gifted/advanced)

A Few of the Many References Supporting the Above Definitions

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