



The *Other* Knowledge Gap: Calling Attention to Educator Knowledge

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Big Ideas

1. Why is TRL Needed?
2. Curricula: Necessary But Not Sufficient
3. Educator Knowledge: Maximum Outcomes Depend On It
4. Calls to Action for Those in Positions of Power





What is The Reading League?

TRL is a nonprofit whose mission is to:

- advance the **awareness**,
- **understanding**, and
- **use** of evidence-aligned reading instruction.





How Did TRL Begin?

- Study of instructional design in clinical settings
- Divide between typical teacher prep and knowledge of science
- Working in isolation - need a league of like-minded stakeholders





There is an evidence base.

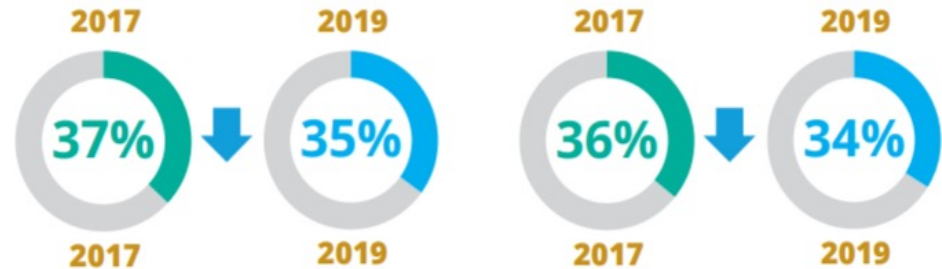
- 50+ years of research in multiple disciplines
- Largely convergent
- We are committed to building the pipeline from research to practice



NAEP 2019



Percent of Students At or Above Proficient



2022 = 33%

Grade 4

2022 = 31%

Grade 8



Materials:

- leveled readers
- Storytown basil (fiction + nonfiction)
- Practice workbooks
- Spelling workbooks
- Grammar workbooks
- Storytown vocab (robust vocab)
- Intervention workbooks (Climbing Higher)
- Wilson / Foundations *
- **RTC / RTR ***
- **LLI** (word work, reread, writing, rhyming)
- Reading A-Z
- Raz-Kids
- Headsprout
- Intervention Station *
- Scholastic News / Science &
- Phonics
- **HELPS** fluency *

Practices:

- Guided reading groups
- Vocab images / powerpoint
- drill sound cards *
- Say it, rhyme it, spell it (game) *
- manipulating words *
- Sound boards
- journal writing
- dictation *
- progress monitoring
- whole groups skills (grammar, focus skill, spelling, vocab)
- center based learning
- movement activities
- syllable claps / word parts

We all have responsibility.

Know the research, reflect, and respond

Honestly evaluate current practices and stop doing what is not working

Support each other in building evidence-aligned knowledge and practice





Curricula: Necessary But Not Sufficient

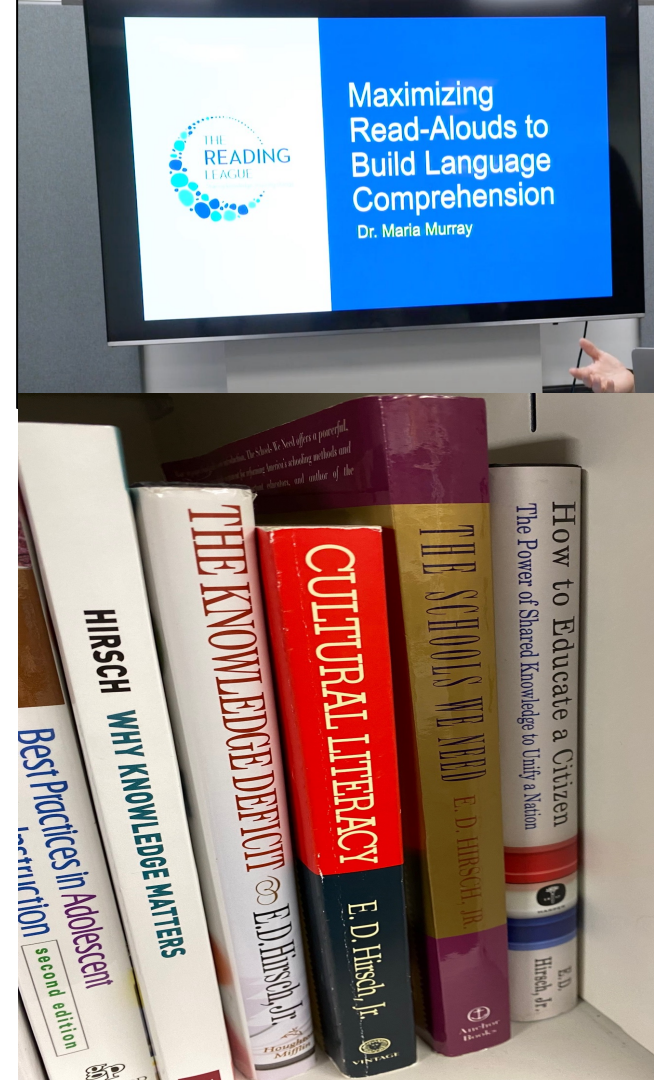
Knowledge Matters

4. Language Comprehension Ability: One of Two Essential Components of Reading Comprehension

MARIA S. MURRAY

Abstract

After a brief commentary on the overall importance of knowledge to language comprehension ability, learning, and memory, this chapter then goes on to describe in more detail the elements that contribute to language comprehension. Language comprehension is one of the two essential components for learning to read in the Simple View of Reading. The other is word recognition, which was covered in [Chapter 3](#). Similar to the previous chapter that emphasized word recognition, this chapter presents the skills, elements, and components of language comprehension using the framework of the Simple View of Reading. The Simple View is a representative model explaining that during reading both word recognition and language comprehension coordinate to produce skillful reading comprehension, and it also portrays the many elements that combine to build each component. Each element that ultimately contributes to strategic language comprehension is described, and an ex-



The Best Curriculum in the World

It's an instrument.

The effectiveness of an instrument is dependent upon the knowledge of its user.





Educator Knowledge: Outcomes Depend On It



Educator Knowledge

We cannot assume that educators, regardless of their certifications and/or years of experience, possess the knowledge to enact evidence-aligned literacy instruction. However, it is certainly not their fault.

(Binks-Cantrell, Joshi & Washburn, 2012; Binks-Cantrell, Washburn & Joshi, 2012; Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich & Stanovich, 2004; Cunningham, Ziblski, Stanovich & Stanovich, 2009; Spear-Swerling & Ziblski, 2014; Stark, Snow, Eadie & Goldfeld, 2016)



Don't we *all* have unfinished learning?

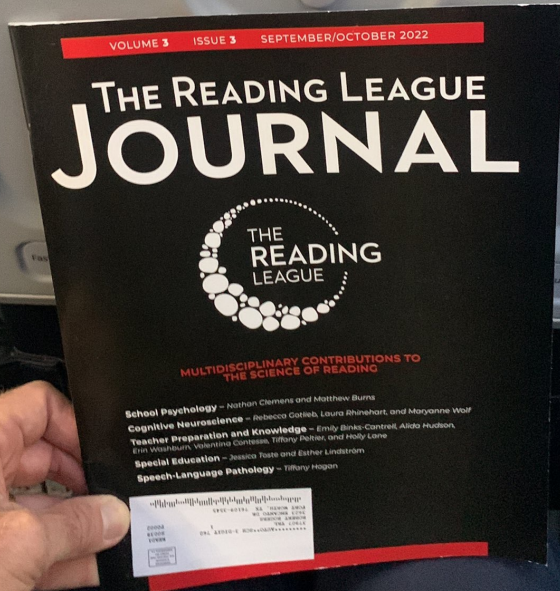
A Roundtable Discussion



The *other* knowledge gap

“Curricula alone are not able to respond to students’ needs in real time and make in-the-moment instructional decisions based upon the continual informal assessment that happens through observation and interaction during instruction.”

Binks-Cantrell et al. (September/October 2022, p. 20).



The “Best Weapon Against Reading Failure”

- Quality reading instruction
- What’s needed for that? Advanced professional knowledge and general teaching strategies (Shulman, 1986)



We can't teach what we don't know

- Educators showed misunderstandings of
 - language structures in phonology, phonics, morphology
 - foundational aspects of language
 - concepts related to fluency, vocabulary, and reading instruction



Teacher educator knowledge matters

“Preservice teachers who were taught by teacher educators with higher levels of knowledge of basic language constructs performed significantly better than preservice teachers taught by less knowledgeable teacher educators – and even outperformed the less knowledgeable teacher educators themselves.”

(See Binks-Cantrell et al., 2022, p. 22).



Decision maker knowledge matters

Teachers with higher knowledge are more likely to engage in evidence-based literacy instruction. But to see the effect of knowledge on student achievement, that knowledge must actually be put into practice.

One major roadblock is when preservice teachers enter schools that use curriculum programs that are contradictory to what they have learned about reading science in their coursework.

It is critical that school leaders are also equipped with an understanding of what reading science says about effective literacy instruction and how to best support their teachers in its implementation.





Calls to Action for Those in Power

Where can you start?



The Science of Reading

A Defining Movement

**Download for FREE or
purchase hard copy at
thereadingleague.org**

SCIENCE OF READING
DEFINING GUIDE



Preamble

Humankind's most precious treasure is our children, and our future depends on them. We recognize literacy as a fundamental human right that empowers individuals in a society. We also know that grim life outcomes are connected to illiteracy. We are resolved to prevent the collateral damage that is incurred by our students, especially the most vulnerable among them, when adults have limited access to the convergent scientific evidence.

Research has identified assessment and instructional practices with which every teacher and leader should be equipped. We believe that providing educators with this knowledge is a moral imperative. We are committed to evidence-aligned reading instruction being scaled with a sense of urgency in a comprehensive and systematic way by multiple stakeholders.



Rationale for Promoting a Common Definition of the Science of Reading

Although the scientific evidence base for effective reading has existed for decades, the term “the science of reading” has gained traction in the last few years, potentially leading to misunderstandings. As a result, we believe that a common definition is useful for the field.



The Definition

The **science of reading** is a vast, interdisciplinary body of *scientifically-based** research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

* See the chart on page 11 for a better understanding of what is meant by scientifically-based research



What the Science of Reading is **NOT**

- ❌ an ideology or philosophy
- ❌ a fad, trend, new idea, or pendulum swing
- ❌ a political agenda
- ❌ a one-size-fits-all approach
- ❌ a program of instruction
- ❌ a single, specific component of instruction, such as phonics



Calls to Action for All Stakeholders

We call on **educators** to embrace opportunities to learn about the science of reading, reflect upon their practice, and challenge approaches to reading instruction that are not aligned with the scientific evidence.

We call on **district and school administrators, school boards, and school committees** to prioritize professional development on the science of reading for themselves and for educators and to provide the necessary support (e.g., coaching) to adopt evidence-aligned assessments, resources, and instructional practices.

We call on **state departments of education** to collaborate with experts in the science of reading to design responsible rollouts of integrated initiatives based on the findings from the science of reading and to prioritize leadership preparation to support teacher implementation of evidence aligned practices (e.g., educator standards, licensing exams).



We call on **schools of education** to align coursework with the science of reading and to foster interdisciplinary collaboration between professors of education and professors of cognitive psychology, neuroscience, speech and language studies, linguistics, and related fields.

We call on **pediatricians** to prioritize the screening of early speech and language developmental milestones to identify red flags for future reading difficulties.

We call on **curriculum publishers and professional learning providers** to create and promote products that are aligned with the science of reading, and to eliminate non-aligned products from their offerings.

We call on **federal agencies and private foundations** to continue to fund research on issues and questions critical to better understanding reading development, reading difficulties, and the most effective forms of instruction.

We call on **policymakers** to develop solutions that prioritize the acquisition and application of the science of reading in schools, and ensure that they are supported by realistic timelines and resources.

We call on **professional literacy associations** to provide learning opportunities and resources aligned to the science of reading.

We call on **reading scientists** to continue to investigate critical questions related to the science of reading, to translate important findings to practitioners in terminology that is readily applicable to their practice, and to actively seek outlets in which a direct partnership between scientists and educators can be developed.

We call on **parents and caregivers** to take an active part in ensuring schools and school systems are utilizing literacy practices aligned with the science of reading.



Thank you for your commitment to building
educator knowledge and
increasing student achievement

Become a “Leaguer” at
thereadingleague.org

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