


## Vocabulary and Oral Language: The Keys to Comprehension

DIBELS Super Institute and Mentor Summit  
Las Vegas, NV  
July 11, 2017

Ruth Kaminski  
Dynamic Measurement Group

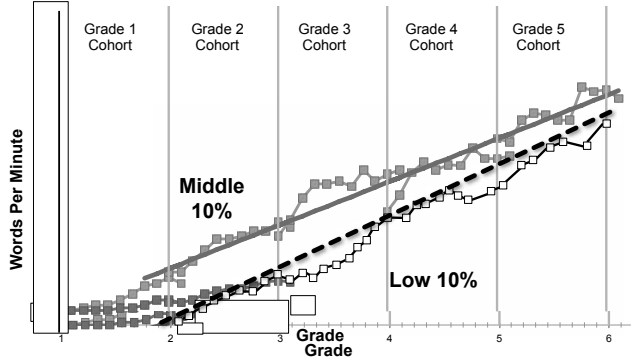
2



2

## Need for DIBELS® Change Outcomes

We CAN change reading outcomes for children.



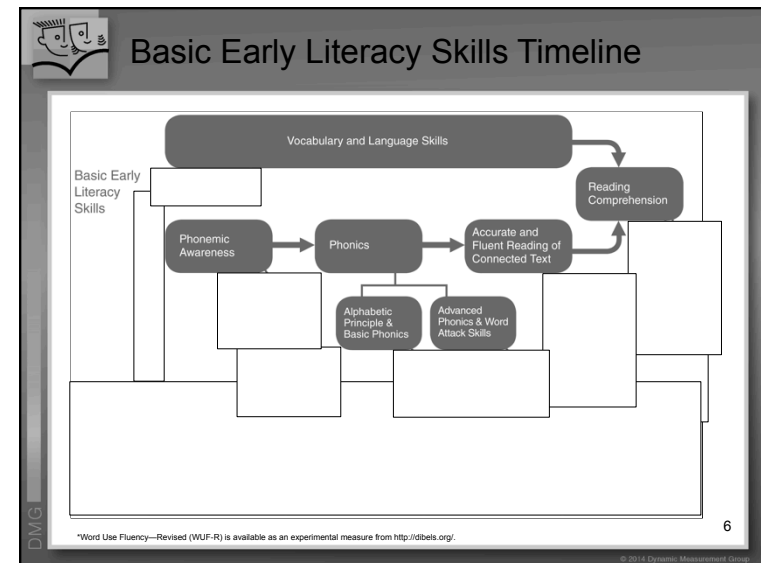
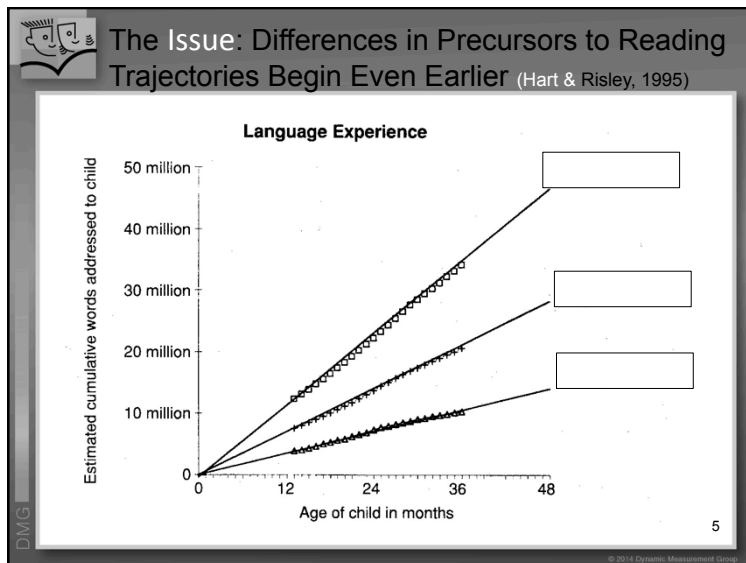
3

## Foundational Reading Skills: The Big 5

- Phonemic awareness
- Alphabetic principle and phonics
- Accurate and fluent reading of connected text
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

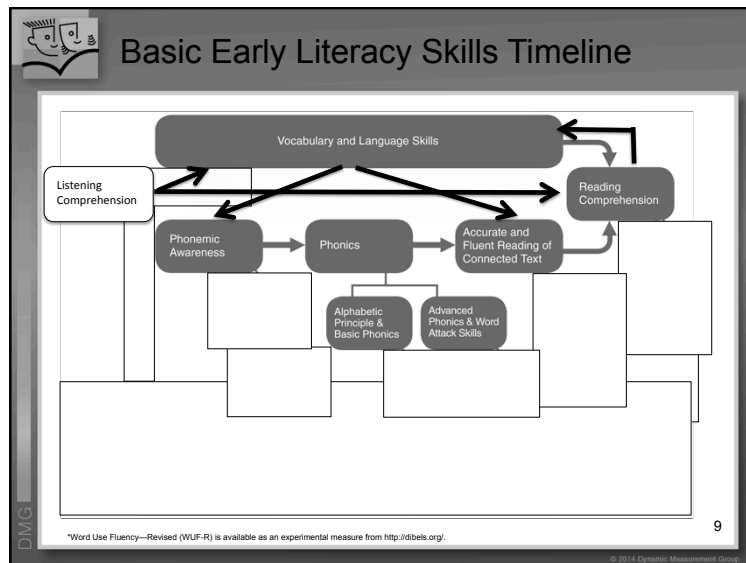
*Interventions focused on fostering language aren't easy to develop or implement. The interconnected and complex nature of language comes with a long developmental history and draws on a broad range of linguistic and cognitive capacities. – Shanahan & Lonigan, 2012*

4



- ### Relationship Between Oral Language and Reading
- ▶ Variations in oral language abilities account for differences in reading comprehension more significant than age, nonverbal ability or non-word reading (Nation & Snowling 2004)
  - ▶ Strong link between development of oral language and the development of phonological awareness (Dickinson et al., 2003; Storch & Whitehurst, 2002; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998)
  - ▶ Decoding skills are supported by vocabulary, syntactic and semantic understandings (Share, 1999)
  - ▶ Contribution of different aspects of oral language to reading varies at different stages of reading development and with readers of different abilities (Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002)
- 7

- ### Relationship Between Oral Language and Reading
- ▶ In early grades, reading comprehension depends heavily on emerging word-reading skills.
  - ▶ As children accomplish the ability to automatically and fluently read printed words, language comprehension begins to contribute more to individual differences in reading comprehension.
  - ▶ Those with poor word-reading abilities (i.e., poor decoders) lag behind their typically developing peers on reading comprehension measures in the early grades, even if they have good language development. However, those with poor language comprehension, in spite of relatively proficient word-reading ability, usually do not lag behind their typically developing peers on reading comprehension tests until they have had one or two years of reading instruction (Catts et al., 2005).
- 8



## Language Skills

- ▶ Sounds in words (phonology)
- ▶ Meaning of words (vocabulary/ semantics)
- ▶ Knowledge of word parts (morphology)
- ▶ Order of words and relationship of words in sentences (syntax)
- ▶ Purpose/function (pragmatics)

DMG

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group

## Reading Comprehension Skills

*Children who comprehend well go beyond word and sentence comprehension to construct a representation of the situation or state of affairs described by the text.*

*In some theories, this is referred to as a “mental model” and it involves organizing a text’s multiple ideas into an integrated whole, using both information from the text and the reader’s own world knowledge.*

*To do this, successful comprehenders draw upon a set of higher-level cognitive and linguistic skills, including inferencing, monitoring comprehension, and using text structure knowledge.*

DMG

11

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group

## Reading Comprehension Skills

- ▶ Knowledge and skills necessary for text integration and coherence
  - ✱ Knowledge of narrative and expository text structure
  - ✱ Knowledge and understanding of linguistic cohesive devices
- ▶ Verbal reasoning/cognitive skills
  - ✱ Comprehension monitoring
  - ✱ Ability to make inferences
  - ✱ Critical thinking
- ▶ Background knowledge
- ▶ Working memory

DMG

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group



## How to Advance Reading Comprehension

Begin with listening comprehension

- ▶ Shared book reading with young children
  - ✧ Dialogic reading strategies
  - ✧ Repeated readings
  - ✧ Story Retellings
- ▶ Read to students at *all* ages

13

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group



## How to Advance Reading Comprehension

Explicitly teach vocabulary

- Select corpus of words to teach
- Select words
- Teach new words
  - Teach definitions explicitly
  - Provide repeated exposure to new words
  - Provide opportunities to use new vocabulary words

14

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group



## How to Advance Reading Comprehension

- Teach morphology
  - Teach morphology in the context of rich, explicit vocabulary instruction
  - Teach the underlying knowledge about morphemes and transforming words
  - Teach students to use morphology as a cognitive strategy with explicit steps

15

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group



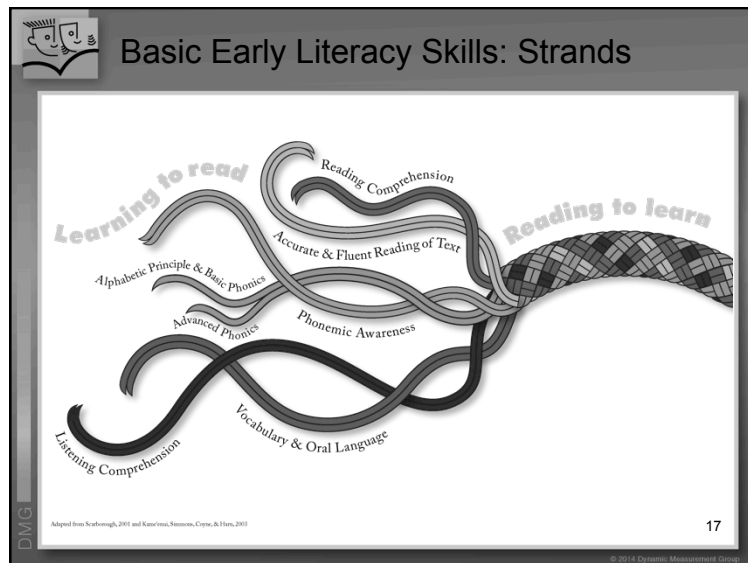
## How to Advance Comprehension

Build word consciousness

- ▶ *Getting students interested in and excited about words is a crucial component of effective literacy programs.* (Graves & Watts-Taffe 2008)
  - ▶ Create a word-rich environment
  - ▶ Recognize and promote adept use of words in speech
  - ▶ Promote wordplay
  - ▶ Teach students about words

16

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group





## References

- Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: Guilford.
- Graves, M.F., Baumann, J.F., Blachowicz, C.L.Z., Manyak, P., Bates, A., Cieply, C., Davis, J.R., & Von Gunten, H. (2014). Words, words everywhere, but which ones do we teach? *The Reading Teacher*, 67(5), 333-346.
- Graves, M.F., & Watts-Taffe, S. (2008). For the love of words: Fostering word consciousness in young readers. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(3), 185-193.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore: P.H. Brookes.
- Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (2003). The early catastrophe: The 30 million word gap by age 3. *American Educator*, Spring, 4-9.
- Kieffer, M.J., & Lesaux, N.K. (2007). Breaking down words to build meaning: Morphology, vocabulary, and reading comprehension in the urban classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 61(2), 134-144.
- Lane, H.B. & Allen, S.A. (2010). The vocabulary-rich classroom: Modeling sophisticated word use to promote word consciousness and vocabulary growth. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(5), 362-370.
- National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) (2008). *Developing early literacy: A scientific synthesis of early literacy development and implications for intervention*. Jessup, M.A.: National Institute for Literacy. Available at [http://nincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/\(NELP\)](http://nincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/(NELP))
- Shanahan, T. & Lonigan, C. (2013). *Early childhood literacy: The National Early Literacy Panel and beyond*. Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

21

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group



## Remember:

The more that you read,  
the more things you will know.  
The more that you learn,  
the more places you'll go.  
**Dr. Seuss**



THE THINGSWE SAY.COM

22

© 2014 Dynamic Measurement Group