

Language, Literacy, and Learning in Adolescence: Evidence for Explaining Academic Failure

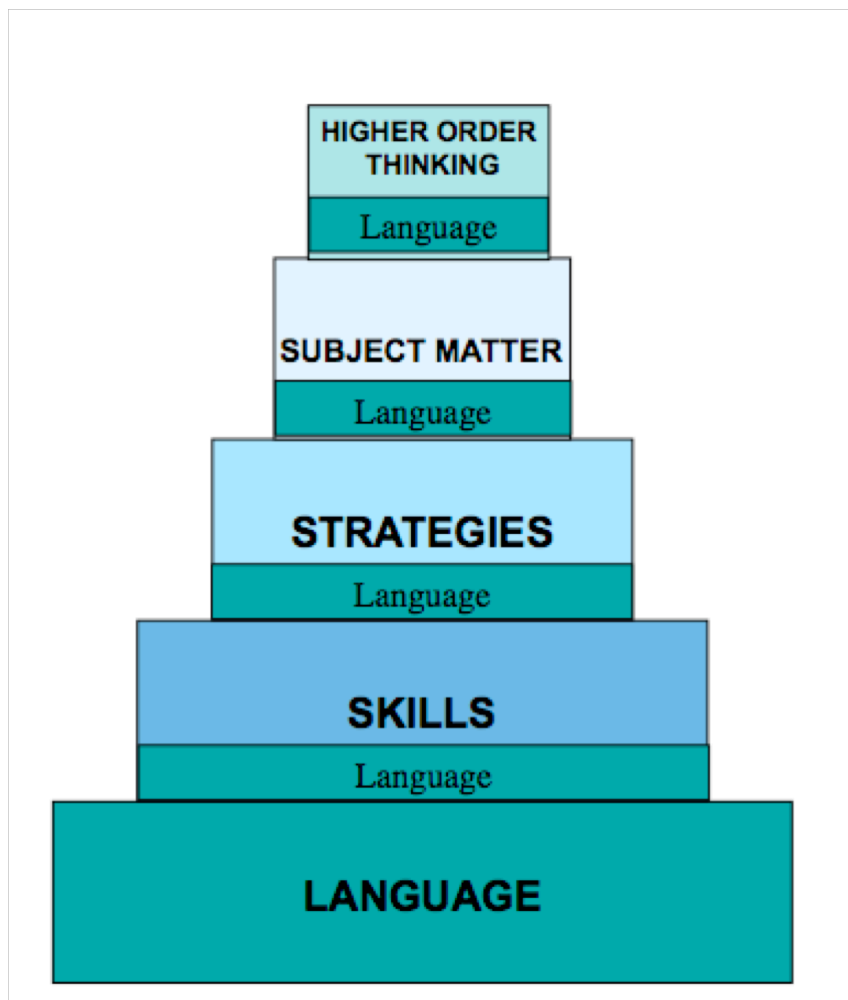
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Outcomes

- ❑ Explore academic achievement in adolescents as a function of language underpinnings.
- ❑ Define disciplinary literacy.
- ❑ Identify key evidence based practices in language and literacy with adolescents..
- ❑ Plan follow-up actions based on learning in this workshop.

The Language Basis of Academic Competency



Adapted from
Deshler

What Should We Learn from Research on Language Reciprocity?

Listening, speaking, reading and writing all language-based processes.

Commission on Reading in 1985 which concluded that, "Reading must be seen as part of a child's general language development and not as a discrete skill isolated from listening, speaking and writing. Reading instruction builds especially on oral language. If this foundation is weak, progress in reading will be slow and uncertain"(p.30).

The processes are inter-related

Kroll, B. (1981). Developmental relationships between speaking and writing. In B. Roll & R. Vann (Eds.), *Exploring speaking-writing relationships: Connections and contrasts* (pp. 32–54). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Ruddell, R. B., & Ruddell, M. R. (1994). Language acquisition and literacy processes. In R. B. Ruddell, M. R. Ruddell, & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (4th ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association

They have a reciprocal relationship.

Evidence exists that problems in these areas are related.

Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J. B. (1999). Language basis of reading disabilities: Evidence from a longitudinal investigation. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3, 331–361.

Lombardino, L. J., Riccio, C. A., Hynd, G. W., & Pinheiro, S. B. (1997). Linguistic deficits in children with reading disabilities. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 6(3), 71–78.

Stothard, S. E., & Hulme, C. (1992). Reading comprehension difficulties in children: The role of language comprehension and working memory skills. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 4, 245–256.

Evidence exists that working in one area yields positive gains in other areas.

Seidenberg, P. L. (1989). Relating text-processing research to reading and writing Instruction for learning disabled students. *Learning Disabilities Focus*, 5(1), 4-12.

Taylor, B. M. & Beach, R. W. (1984). The effects of text structure instruction on middle-grade students' comprehension and production of expository text. *Reading Research quarterly*, 19, 114-146.

The Language Base of Literacy Processes

- Experiences with language begins for most people in the spoken language, or oral mode.
- Reading uses visual input as a portal into the language processing.
- The language base includes skills that:

Linguistic,

The linguistic elements of language are the rules that govern the structures of language associated with the subsystems of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. A proficient reader must be a proficient language user who has internalized these elements of language. The reader must have linguistic skills in these areas to process and produce language. For reading comprehension, you must: (1) have a basic understanding of the sound system, or phonology, (2) know how sounds are put together to form words, which is morphology, (3) know how words are joined together to form phrases, clauses and sentences. That's syntax. (4) understand the meaning of words, sentences and texts, which is called semantics and (5) know how language is used differently in a variety of contexts, which is known as pragmatics

Related cognitive,
Metacognitive
Metalinguistic

An important application of word consciousness is paraphrasing. It is very important to recognize the metalinguistic nature of paraphrasing.

Another kind of metalinguistic awareness is knowledge of language structures. For example, knowing the organizational framework of various types of texts can assist with comprehension of meaning

Complexity

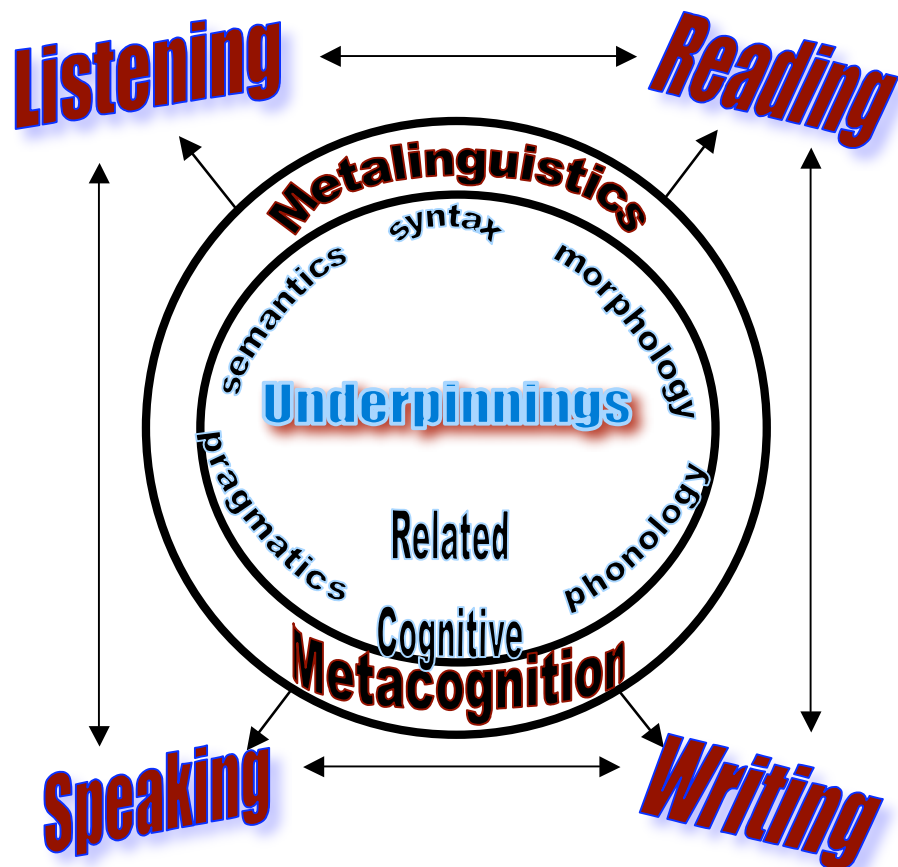
- In many instances of school-related language, the written language that students have to read is more complex than the oral language they use in school.
- Multiple predication, subordination and extended clauses are used more in written language for elaboration. Therefore, the requirement for complex semantic-syntactic structures in the student's language repertoire usually increases for reading comprehension.
- The complexity of individual sentences affects comprehension and recall (Bisanz, Das, Vanahagen & Henderson, 1992).
- Processing difficulty increases as the propositions, or ideas within a sentence increase, requiring higher level syntactic forms (Bashir, Conte & Heerde, 1998).
- Understanding relations between sentences that have cohesive devices are among the higher level linguistic and problem solving skills required for text comprehension (Roth & Spekman, 1989).

Bashir, A. S., Conte, B. M., & Heerde, S. M. (1998). Language and school success: Collaborative challenges and choices. In D. D. Merritt & B. Cullatta (Eds.), *Language intervention in the classroom* (pp. 1-36). San Diego, CA: Singular.

Bisanz, G. L., Das, J. P., Vanahagen, C., & Henderson, H. (1992). Structural components or reading time and recall for sentences in narratives: Exploring chances with age and reading ability. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(1), 103-115.

Roth, F., & Spekman, N. (1989). Higher-order language processes and reading disabilities. In A. G. Kamhi & H. W. Catts (Eds.), *Reading disabilities: A developmental language perspective* (pp. 159-197). Boston, MA: College-Hill Press.

Language Basis of Literacy



Language Problems Interfering with Reading and Writing

- Problems with understanding and/or using the subsystems of language:
 - meaning - semantics,
 - form -phonology, morphology and syntax
 - context - pragmatics
- Problems can be
 - linguistic - trouble understanding or using the language themselves.
 - metalinguistic - lack of language awareness; word consciousness (they can't think or talk about language as an entity)
- Related cognitive problems can seriously affect language learning and performance, especially in the areas of attention, memory and organization
- Difficulties in metacognition affect monitoring and repair.
- Another way to describe language problems is the level at which they occur
 - word,
 - phrase,
 - sentence,
 - discourse/text.

What Does Research Tell Us about What to Do with Adolescent Literacy?

Key Sources

Critical Factors Underlying Reading Proficiency (Torgesen, et al., 2007)

- ◆ Fluency of text reading
- ◆ Vocabulary, or the breadth and depth of knowledge about the meaning of words
- ◆ Active and flexible use of reading strategies to enhance comprehension
- ◆ Background, or prior knowledge related to the content of the text being read
- ◆ Higher level reasoning and thinking skills
- ◆ Motivation and engagement for understanding and learning from text.

Findings (Scammacca, et al, 2007)

- ◆ Adolescence is not too late to intervene. Interventions do benefit older students.
- ◆ Older students with reading difficulties benefit from interventions focused at both the word and the text level.
- ◆ Older students with reading difficulties benefit from improved knowledge of word meanings and concepts.
- ◆ Word-study interventions are appropriate for older students struggling at the word level.
- ◆ Teachers can provide interventions that are associated with positive effects.
- ◆ Teaching comprehension strategies to older students with reading difficulties is beneficial.

Findings (Edmonds, et al., 2009)

- ◆ Struggling readers can improve in their reading comprehension when taught reading comprehension practices.
- ◆ Explicit instruction in comprehension benefits students with reading difficulties and disabilities.
- ◆ Older struggling readers benefit from explicit comprehension strategy instruction modeling and thinking aloud how to self-question and reflect during and after reading engaging students to become actively involved in monitoring their understanding and processing text meaning.
- ◆ There is a small to moderate effect for comprehension from word-level interventions.
- ◆ Increased reading rate and accuracy did not always result in improved comprehension.
- ◆ For students who lack word-reading skills, it is necessary to build these word-level skills while teaching comprehension so that access to increasingly difficult levels of print is available to them.

Recommendations (Kamil, et al., 2008)

- ◆ Provide explicit vocabulary instruction.
- ◆ Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation.
- ◆ Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning.
- ◆ Make available intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by qualified specialists.

	How do we address?	How might we address?
Word Study		
Background Knowledge –World Knowledge –Vocabulary –Concepts		
Text/Discourse Structures –Discipline Specific –Syntax		
Cognitive Strategies –Goal-specific –Monitoring/repair –Packaging		
Motivation & Engagement		

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