

The Educator's Science of Reading Glossary



An easy-to-use summary of the
fundamental concepts for
understanding the Science of Reading

First Edition
April 2022



DEAR FELLOW EDUCATORS,

In an effort to provide you with timely information in the field of literacy, we have compiled a glossary of terms that may prove to be beneficial to you. Enclosed you will find the first edition of VSLA's Science of Reading Glossary for the classroom teacher. This can be a companion document for our latest publication series, The Collection, or it can be used as a guide towards a greater understanding of some of the terms of the Science of Reading.

In our first volume of the Glossary, we offer the fundamentals that are essential to understanding the Science of Reading. Our second edition of the Glossary will be published by June 2022 and will contain additional terms for your use in adapting to our changing literacy environment. For now, refer to our recently released thematic Collection for a deeper dive into the Science of Reading, and be on the lookout for the second edition of the Collection in May.

Please let us know what you think. We are committed to providing information on current topics in the field of literacy. We welcome your feedback on this and all of our publications.

VSLA would like to thank Heggerty, our co-sponsor in the creation of the Science of Reading Glossary, and without whose generosity we would not be able to bring this new publication to you.

Yours in literacy,

Tamara Williams
President
Virginia State Literacy Association

Basal Reading Series

A series of textbooks that are used to provide reading instruction in a classroom.

Decodable Text

Text in which a large proportion of words (approximately 70%–80%) comprise sound-symbol relationships that have already been taught. This is used to provide practice with specific decoding skills and to form a bridge between learning phonics and applying phonics in independent reading of text.

Decoding

The ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences. This refers to the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out. Decoding is a pathway that contributes to orthographic mapping.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. (Source: International Dyslexia Association)

Encoding

The act of hearing a sound (phoneme) and writing the symbol (grapheme) that represents that sound. Spelling patterns are relied upon for effective encoding.

Evidence-Based Practices in Reading

Practices for teaching reading grounded and proven in research.

Heart Words

High-frequency words that are irregularly spelled, and whose irregular grapheme-phoneme correspondences must be explicitly taught in order to “know them by heart.”

Examples of heart words include: said, are, and where.

High Frequency Words

Words that most commonly appear in print, and are divided into two different groups: words that are phonetically decodable (regularly spelled) and words with irregular spellings. Often referred to as “sight words”, but should not be taught as visually memorizing whole words as units, rather by using decoding to teach the regular or irregular grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Morphology

The knowledge of meaningful word parts in a language (typically the knowledge of combining prefixes, suffixes, and/or roots and base words). A morpheme is the smallest unit of “meaning” in spoken language.

MSV

Meaning, Structure/syntax, and Visual cues.

An approach used when coding miscues on running records, using meaning, syntax, and structure. Information from MSV is often used by teachers to identify which skills of the Three-Cueing System to teach. Students who cannot read proficiently rely on pictures, memorization, and meaning, rather than relying on graphophonic connections.

Phonics

The understanding of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding).

Phonics Instruction

Explicit instruction on letter-sound correspondences, in both reading (decoding) and spelling (encoding), that help students become fluent and automatic readers. A phonics lesson uses a cumulative scope and sequence and explicit instructional routines: warming up with phonemic awareness, teaching sound/spelling correspondences and high frequency words, connecting to decodable text, and incorporating guided spelling routines.

Phonological Awareness

A broad skill that includes identifying, blending, segmenting, and manipulating larger units of oral language. There are 4 levels - word, syllable, instryllable, and phoneme. (Source: Core Reading Sourcebook, 3rd edition)

Reading Wars

The continual debate of how to teach reading: explicit phonemic awareness and phonics instruction or the whole language approach.

Scarborough's Reading Rope

A visual representation, developed by Dr. Hollis Scarborough, which represents the multiple strands/components of word recognition and language comprehension. The individual threads are woven together to show the co-occurring processes (Word Recognition and Language Comprehension) that are necessary for proficient reading.

Science of Reading

Scientificallly-evidenced research about how reading is developed and processed including effective instructional practices that support learning to read and write. The components of the Science of Reading include a comprehensive and integrated, structured literacy approach when teaching. This includes instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics to develop automatic word recognition, along with fluency, vocabulary, and language comprehension.

Sight Words

Words that are recognized instantly upon sight (includes words with regular and irregular spellings). Any word can be a sight word.

Simple View of Reading

A widely accepted, scientific view represented by a formula that says that skilled and fluent reading has two basic components: word recognition (decoding) and language comprehension. Decoding (D) x Language Comprehension (LC) = Reading Comprehension (RC) . The Simple View formula (Gough and Tunmer, 1986) makes clear that strong reading comprehension cannot occur unless both decoding skills and language comprehension abilities are strong.

Structured Literacy

An approach that uses explicit, systematic teaching that focuses on phonemic awareness, word recognition, phonics and decoding, spelling, and syntax at the sentence and paragraph levels. The term was coined by The International Dyslexia Association. Principles of effective structured literacy instruction include explicit instruction, systematic and cumulative curriculum, differentiation, opportunities for practice and feedback, and effective instructional strategies.

Three Cueing System

This approach consists of semantic, syntactic and graphophonic cues that students are instructed to use when reading. This approach was popularized by researchers in the 1960s and 1970s as an approach to early reading instruction. This encourages/teaches guessing at words. Syntactic and semantic cues can be used to help determine the meaning of unknown words, but that graphophonic (visual pattern of words) is what should be relied upon first when decoding an unknown word.

Whole Language

A philosophy that emphasizes the construction of meaning through the written word and then that meaning through writing. This instructional approach is based on the philosophy that children will read naturally through exposure to books. This has been proven to be an ineffective approach to teaching reading.

Whole Word Approach

Memorizing words as whole visual units rather than processing individual phonemes. This approach began in the 1950's and has proven to be ineffective.

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About Heggerty

Heggerty is a literacy education company providing the #1 phonemic awareness curriculum for preschool and elementary classrooms. Founded nearly 20 years ago by Dr. Michael Heggerty, a reading instruction pioneer, we provide digital and print curriculum, classroom resources, and professional development to help educators empower the next generation of readers. The Heggerty curriculum can be found worldwide and we are proud to partner with more than half of all school districts in the U.S. to transform the way children learn to read.

Learn more at www.Heggerty.org/VSLA

About VSLA

For over 50 years, VSLA has been mission focused, leading the advancement of literacy in the Commonwealth. We support the entire VSLA community with current information on literacy instruction for 21st century learners. At VSLA we believe that every individual has the right to knowledgeable and qualified literacy educators and that literacy instruction must be equitable and culturally relevant.

VSLA publishes the journal, Reading in Virginia; a thematic series- The Collection; and this Glossary series to help classroom teachers acquire the latest knowledge in literacy education. VSLA's widely recognized programs include, our Annual Conference, the Virginia Readers' Choice program and our local offerings that attract audiences from Virginia and beyond.

To learn more please go to www.VSLAtoday.org and join us as we bring literacy to every corner of Virginia.