ENGLISH K–6

Support Materials for Students with Special Education Needs 2011

Reading

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Reading

Difficulties students may experience in the reading strand

Students may experience difficulties with decoding and/or comprehension in the reading strand. Students who experience difficulty with reading will experience difficulty in all curriculum areas when reading is required (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe 2002).

Decoding

Decoding involves translating written words into their spoken equivalents. It includes the application of letter–sound knowledge and whole-word recognition.

> **Note:** Students may demonstrate their ability to decode words in other ways, for example sign language.

To comprehend printed text, students need to decode text with accuracy and fluency (p 20), thus freeing up attention to enable them to focus on meaning.

Comprehension

Students commence reading instruction with varying levels of language comprehension. Before learning to read, language comprehension is developed through speaking and listening.

Students utilise their background knowledge, vocabulary knowledge (Speaking and listening p 35) and knowledge of the language system (grammar and syntax) to support their comprehension. To be competent readers, students need to develop all levels of comprehension (p 22).

What evidence of learning is required?

Given their critical role in reading, it is important for teachers to assess and carefully monitor the following aspects of literacy (as appropriate to a student's stage of learning).

Reading and aspects of literacy

What	Why
Phonemic awareness	The ability to blend and segment sounds is essential for reading. Difficulty with phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of future reading difficulties.
Letter–sound relationships	Decoding using letter–sound relationships provides students with a system they can use to work out words, including unfamiliar words. Automatic word recognition develops when students have had sufficient practise identifying letter–sounds and blending them together to decode a word.
Word parts and whole-words	Recognition of word parts and whole words (particularly high frequency words) is important to reading fluency.
Fluency	Reading fluency involves appropriate pace, attention to punctuation and expression. It is essential for reading comprehension.
Vocabulary	Vocabulary knowledge is important for both decoding and comprehension. Decoding is made easier if a word is in a student's oral vocabulary. To be able to comprehend a text, students need to be able to understand most of the vocabulary.
Comprehension	Comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading. As students' reading comprehension develops they transition from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn'. This in turn provides an opportunity for further language development.

For students experiencing difficulty in reading, teachers should undertake diagnostic assessment. This enables the teacher to identify specific areas of reading difficulty and to determine appropriate intervention strategies.

Below are examples of what may be observed by a teacher and the contributing knowledge, skills and strategies which may require assessment/further investigation.

Investigating reading skills/strategies

What may be observed	Contributing skills/strategies which may require assessment/further investigation
Decoding accuracy *The student:* • guesses words • reads words incorrectly • substitutes words • over-relies on context cues (eg pictures) to work out words • has difficulty with longer words • relies heavily on beginning letter–sounds	• letter–sound recognition (as appropriate to stage) • blending of letter–sounds to decode words • whole-word reading (particularly high frequency words and irregular words) • breaking words into word parts (eg syllables), decoding a part at a time and blending together • oral vocabulary (CIERA 2002)
Reading fluency ***(Chard, Vaughan & Tyler 2002)*** *The student:* • reads in a laboured way • does not comprehend or remember what they have read • reads with little or no expression • does not attend to punctuation or group text into chunks	• fluency with identifying letter–sounds and blending them together to decode words • automatic recognition of whole words (particularly high frequency words) • understanding of punctuation and its impact on meaning
Comprehension *The student:* • does not understand or remember what he/she has read	• reading fluency • background knowledge • vocabulary knowledge • use of contextual and semantic information to infer meaning • levels of comprehension (p 22) • memory (difficulty remembering what was read) • text selection too difficult or not engaging for the student

How will the evidence be gathered?

Examples of assessment strategies for particular aspects of reading are listed below. These may involve assessment strategies used for diagnostic purposes. Most of the assessment strategies below can be planned so that they take place as part of teaching and learning experiences.

Assessing aspects of reading

What am I assessing?	How will this evidence be gathered?
Phonemic awareness • blending • segmenting	*The student:* • undertakes phonemic awareness activities (ie blending and segmenting sounds)
Decoding accuracy • recognising letter–sounds • blending letter–sounds • recognising whole words	*The student:* • identifies letter–sounds (may be from a published assessment) • 'sounds out' words using letter–sound relationships (may be from a published assessment) • identifies high frequency words from a list of words (may be from a published assessment). *The teacher:* • takes running records of passage reading, recording any errors, miscues and self-corrections. The running records are used to determine reading accuracy (% correct) • analyses the types of errors made by a student (Westwood 2004) (eg mispronunciation of vowel-sounds)
Decoding fluency • oral reading fluency • use of phrasing/ punctuation when reading	*The student:* • reads a levelled passage with the teacher recording the number of words read correctly in a minute (cwpm) *The teacher:* • observes the student reading, and records anecdotal notes about the quality of reading (eg expression, punctuation use and phrasing) • records reading samples and compares the quality to previous samples
Comprehension • levels of reading comprehension • strategy use	*The student:* • answers oral and/or written questions at each level of comprehension based on reading of a levelled passage or text *The teacher:* • observes the strategies used by a student to access meaning when reading aloud, eg self-correction, re-reading, etc • interviews the student about their use of learning strategies, eg 'What did you do when you did not understand the sentence?'

Procedures and strategies

All students learn best when teachers adopt an integrated approach to reading that explicitly teaches phonemic awareness, phonics (letter–sound relationships (p 11)), fluency (p 20), vocabulary (Speaking and listening p 35) knowledge and comprehension (p 21). Teachers should also provide students with opportunities to read for authentic purposes, interest and pleasure (Westwood 2006; *English K–6 Syllabus*; National Inquiry 2005).

Students experiencing difficulty with reading require a carefully planned and systematic program addressing their particular areas of difficulty.

The procedures and strategies for reading provided in the support materials are useful for all students but are particularly important for students experiencing difficulty in learning to read.

Phonemic awareness

Sound (phonological) awareness provides students with an understanding of how sounds work in language (the structure of language). This includes an understanding that language is made up of a string of units of sound including larger units (such as words, syllables, onsets and rimes) and smaller units (phonemes).

Sound awareness activities should commence as soon as a student starts school and should include activities such as rhyming, alliteration, blending, segmenting and manipulating sounds.

Research indicates that phonemic awareness is the most useful aspect of sound awareness for the development of reading and spelling (Writing p 11). Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness and involves the ability to deal explicitly with the smallest units in spoken words, ie the phoneme (National Inquiry 2005). Phonemic awareness activities are undertaken orally.

Phonemes are the smallest units in spoken language that change the meaning of words, for example /b/ and /h/ in *bat* and *hat*. Phonemes represent distinct sounds in words, eg the word *go* has two phonemes /g/ and o, the spoken word *check* has three phonemes /ch/ /e/ /ck/ (National Inquiry 2005).

Teachers should place particular emphasis on the following aspects of phonemic awareness:

- joining phonemes together to make words (blending) which is particularly important to reading
- segmenting words into phonemes which is particularly important for spelling (CIERA 2002).

Once students have acquired some letter–sound relationships, teachers should program phonemic awareness activities that correspond with reading and spelling. This assists students to develop a knowledge of the relationship between sounds and their printed representation (DET 2009).

The following are examples of effective procedures for teaching oral blending and segmenting.

Blending

The teacher:

- explains that oral blending will help students to join sounds together to make words
- models how to blend sounds, eg 'Listen to these sounds /r/ /a/ /n/.
  I'll join them together fast to make a word … rrraaannn. The word is ran.'
- provides students with opportunities to practise blending, starting with easier sounds, progressing to more difficult sounds, for example:
  - continuous sounds such as /r/, /l/, /s/, /z/, /f/, /v/, /n/, /m/, /ng/ and vowel sounds, eg run and ran
  - stop sounds such as /t/, /p/, /b/, /c/ and vowel sounds (eg cat, bat, pat)

  Note: It is more difficult to blend stop sounds at the beginning of a word.

  - a combination of continuous and stop sounds, and vowels
- programs oral blending activities that correspond with blending using letter–sound relationships (p 16) once students have acquired a small number of letter–sounds. This assists students to understand the relationship between phonemes and graphemes (letters that represent phonemes) (National Inquiry 2005)
- provides opportunities for students to blend sounds to make easier words (eg vc, cvc), progressing to more difficult words (eg ccvc, cvcc, etc)
- provides students with multiple and varied examples to assist with generalisation.

Segmenting

Students should be provided with opportunities to segment words without pauses (stretching a word), prior to opportunities to segment with a pause between each unit of sound. This is because segmenting without a pause is easier than segmenting with a pause between each phoneme (Carnine et al 2010).

Stretching a word

The teacher:

- explains that learning to stretch a word will help students to hear and identify the sounds that make up a word
- explicitly models how to stretch a word, eg 'Listen to this word … mat. I'll stretch it out … mmmaaattt' (holding each sound for approximately 1½ seconds)
- starts with words that comprise two or three sounds (for example vc, cvc words), progressing to more difficult examples
- programs phonemic awareness activities that correspond with reading and spelling activities for the letter–sound relationships students have acquired. This supports students to develop an understanding of the relationship between phonemes and graphemes
- emphasises the importance of correctly pronouncing each sound
- provides students with multiple and varied examples of stretching words to assist with generalisation.

Segmenting with a pause between each phoneme

The teacher:

- explains that learning to pull a word apart into separate sounds will help students to hear and identify the sounds that make up a word
- provides opportunities for students to clap or tap out phonemes (Rose 2006), so that they recognise each separate sound
- commences with easier segmenting activities progressing to more difficult segmenting activities, for example:
  - identifying the first sound in a word ('What sound can you hear at the beginning of *rocket*?')
  - categorising words with the same beginning sound (Rose 2006) ('Do *bag* and *bin* begin with the same sound?')
  - producing new examples of words starting with the same sound ('Tell me some names in our class that begin with the same sound as *top*')
  - identifying class or family members whose names begin with a sound
  - finding or drawing pictures of words that begin with a sound
  - identifying the phoneme at the end of a word 'What sound can you hear at the end of *pack*?'
  - identifying the phoneme in the middle of a word, eg 'What sound can you hear in the middle of *name*?'
  - segmenting words into separate sounds (phonemes), eg /p/ /i/ /t/, counting the sounds
- identifies the position of a sound in a word
- links segmenting with a pause between each sound to stretching a word, eg 'The word is *chip*, first I stretch it so I can hear the sounds *chiiiippp*. Then I pull the sounds apart /ch/ /i/ /p/. The first sound is /ch/. The middle sound is /i/. The last sound is /p/. The word *chip* has three sounds.'

Letter–sound relationships (phonics)

Explicit teaching of letter–sound relationships (phonics) is important to the growth of early word reading and the prevention of reading difficulties (CIERA 2002). Students' acquisition of and fluency in identifying and blending letter–sounds provides the basis for the development of automatic word recognition through the visual processing (p 18) system.

Through letter–sound instruction, students develop an understanding that there is a predictable relationship between sounds and print (ie the same letter or combination of letters usually represent the same sound). Students learn to use their understanding of these relationships (the alphabetic principle) to decode unfamiliar words.

Students learn that:

- a phoneme can be represented by one or more letters
- a phoneme can be represented or spelled in more than one way, eg the sound /k/ can be represented by c, k and ck
- the same letter or letter-combination may represent more than one sound depending on its context (ie placement in a word), eg the letter 'o' in the word 'lot' represents the letter–sound, the letter 'o' in the word *rope* represents the letter name.

Over time, students are taught to apply increasingly complex and conditional rules. It should be noted that even irregularly spelled words are likely to include some regular letter–sound relationships.

Instruction commences with students learning to produce the sound represented by a letter. After students are able to produce a small number of letter–sounds, they learn to 'sound out' words by producing each letter–sound and blending the letter–sounds (p 16) together to make a word. This is supported by students' phonemic awareness (particularly oral blending (p 9)) and their oral vocabulary knowledge.

With practice, students begin to store an increasing number of words in memory (Rose 2006). These words are recognised as whole words (or sight words). This is essential for reading fluency which supports reading comprehension.

Key features of effective letter–sound instruction:

- letter–sound relationships are taught in an incremental and systematic sequence (Rose 2006) with frequent monitoring of students' progress
- letter–sound instruction is programmed in short, discrete sessions and delivered at a brisk pace (Rose 2006)
- students are provided with frequent opportunities to apply their letter–sound knowledge in authentic, interesting, language-rich reading and writing experiences including using information and communication technologies (National Inquiry 2005; Rose 2006).

Sequence for introducing letter–sounds

There are varied opinions as to the appropriate order for the introduction of letter–sound relationships. The following principles should be taken into consideration when making decisions about an appropriate order for introduction:

- any decisions should be based on what students already know and their learning needs
- more useful (ie commonly occurring) letter–sounds should be introduced before less useful letter–sounds
- initially only the most common sound for the new letter or letter combination should be introduced
- letters or letter combinations that look alike or are likely to cause confusion (for example /b/ and /d/, /oa/, /oi/, /oo/ and /ou/) should be separated
- letters or letter combinations that sound alike (eg /u/ and /a/, /sh/ and /ch/, /ar/ (arm), /ur/ (fur) and /or/ (sport)) should be separated
- letter combinations and/or letters that represent the same sound should be taught together (/ee/ and /ea/, /ai/ and /ay/, /ir/ and /ur/, /oi/ and /oy/, /au/ and /aw/).

The following table presents a possible order for the introduction of letter–sound relationships. The order is based on the principles above, the scope and sequence of phonological and graphological processing skills, and *Direct Instruction Reading* (Carnine et al 2010). It is a guide only and should not be considered as a set sequence.

As students acquire letter–sounds, teachers should provide opportunities for a high level of active practice blending the letter–sounds to make words. Blending should commence when students are able to fluently read 4–6 letter–sounds. Teachers should use the syllabus content, and scope and sequence of phonological and graphological skills to inform the words in which the sounds are to be blended (for example cvc, cvvc, etc).

It is important to note that for students experiencing difficulties, only a limited number of letter–sounds should be introduced at one time.

Introduction of letter–sound relationships

Letter–sound relationship	When	Possible order and considerations
Lower case letter–sounds, and upper case letter–sounds for those capitals that look the same (or similar) as the corresponding lower case letter but are larger in size	After students have had exposure to phonemic awareness activities	*a m t sS i f d r oO g l h uU cC b n kK vV e wW j pP yY xX q zZ* Teachers may choose to introduce digraphs with letters representing the same sound, eg *ph (f), wh (w), kn (n), qu (q)*
Letter names	Teachers may choose to introduce letter names and letter–sounds for a particular letter at the same time	**Note:** Students are likely to come to school having acquired more letter names than letter–sounds (Rose 2006)
The remaining upper case letter–sounds	After students have demonstrated fluency with the lower case and upper case letter–sounds above	*T L M F D I N A R H G B J E Q*
Letter combinations including: • consonant digraphs • vowel digraphs	Each new digraph is introduced when the student can read the previous digraph in a word with fluency	Introduce letter combinations that appear frequently in texts that students are reading *th, er, ing, sh, wh*, qu*, ol, oa, ar, ea, oo, ee, ai, ch, or, ay, igh, ou, ir, ur, kn*, oi, oy, ph*, wr, au, aw* * Refer to lower case letter–sounds above
Rimes **Note:** Nearly 500 words can be derived from the following rimes. The examples below are listed alphabetically. *__ack, __ain, __ake, __ale, __all, __ame, __an, __ank, __ap, __ash, __at, __ate, __aw, __ay, __eat, __ell,* *__est, __ice, __ick, __ide, __igh, __ight, __ill, __in, __ine, __ing, __ink, __ip, __ir, __ock, __oke, __op, __or, __ore, __uck, __ug, __ump, __unk*	Some letter–sound combinations may be more consistent when taught as part of a rime rather than a digraph, for example *ea* taken alone represents a number of sounds in different words, however, it is very regular in the rimes (for example *__eap, __eal, __eat*) except *__ead* (*bread* and *bead*) and *__eaf (sheaf* and *deaf*).	Introduce according to those rimes appearing regularly in texts that students are reading

Individual letter–sounds

The following are examples of how a teacher may use effective procedures when teaching letter–sound relationships.

The teacher:

- commences the introduction of letter–sounds soon after phonemic awareness learning has commenced
- relates letter–sound learning to phonemic awareness, ie explicitly demonstrates the relationship between phonemes (the sound) and graphemes (the letter or letters representing the sound)
- models reading the letter–sound, articulating the sound clearly and correctly, eg the teacher points to the letter *a* and says 'this letter makes the sound /a/. Say aaa.'
- provides students with sufficient time to produce letter–sounds, decreasing the length of the pause over time to increase students' fluency
- emphasises that sounds can be represented in different ways (Rose 2006)
- highlights visual features of the grapheme to assist with visual processing, for example
  - says 'this letter is tall and sits on the line'
  - provides examples and non-examples of the grapheme representing the letter–sound
  - draws attention to similarities and differences with other letters
  - uses visual mnemonics to assist students to associate a grapheme with a sound, eg the shape of a snake for 's'
- programs multisensory activities to assist students to remember the grapheme representing a sound, for example:
  - interactive whiteboard activities
  - match-to-sample
  - tracing/copying/writing activities (eg sky writing)
- provides sufficient practice to assist students to identify letter–sounds with fluency.

Blending letter–sounds

('Sounding out' words by identifying letter–sounds and blending them together)

The teacher:

- provides students with opportunities to identify the number of sounds in a word, using a block (or other concrete materials) to represent each sound. This assists students to connect their knowledge of phonemic awareness to letter–sound learning. The concrete materials are later replaced by graphemes (letter or letter-combination)
- activates students' prior knowledge of oral blending, eg 'We will blend like we did with sounds but this time the letters will tell us which sounds to say, and join together'
- explicitly models blending, eg the teacher says 'Look at this word. We know the sounds for these letters. I'll say them as I point to them, SSSS … aaaaa … mmmm. I'm going to point faster and I'll slide the sounds together to make the word … Sam'
- models reading targeted letter–sounds in different positions in a word
- provides sufficient opportunities to practise blending words to support fluency and the automatic recognition of words and word-parts
- provides opportunities for students to manipulate letters in words, to assist them to be aware of how their letter–sound knowledge and phonemic awareness can assist them to read and write new words
- asks students to produce a sentence using the word they have blended to assist them to link the orthographic representation with the meaning of the word (DET)
- teaches rules for common patterns in words, such as:
  - the 'silent e rule' for vce pattern words (eg 'an *e* following a vowel and a consonant at the end of a word tells us that we should say the letter name (long vowel) for the vowel before. The *e* at the end is silent. Let's use the rule /*r*/ o /*p*/ e. The word is *rope*')
  - later introduces words that are exceptions to letter–sound relationships rules (eg break), or contain uncommon letter patterns (eg fuel, ceiling)
- provides numerous opportunities for students to apply their knowledge of letter–sound relationships to reading and writing, for example:
  - sorting words according to the position of sounds
  - reading books/stories (CIERA 2002)
  - spelling words
  - writing activities
- reinforces that each sound in a word is represented by a letter, or combination of letters and that sounds can be represented in more than one way. The order of the graphemes in words helps to determine how a letter–sound is said.
- demonstrates the reversibility of blending and segmenting to assist students to apply their knowledge of letter–sound relationships to both reading and spelling (Rose 2006).

Manipulating

The teacher:

- models manipulating letters in a word, eg the teacher writes the word 'set' on the board and says 'The word is *set*. I take away the /e/ and write an /i/. The new word is *sit*.'
- provides students with practice manipulating letters in words in small groups by asking students to look at a word and, for example:
  - delete an onset to say the rime separately, eg 'The word is *black*. Now take away the *bl*. What is left?'
  - delete an onset to make a new word, eg 'The word is *shout*. I take away *sh*. What is the new word?'
  - delete a rime to say the onset separately, eg 'The word is *scream*. Now take away the *eam*. What is left?'
  - delete an onset and add a different onset to the rime, eg 'The word is *bring*. Now take away the /*br*/ and put in /*st*/. What is the new word?'
- asks students to provide new examples by manipulating graphemes, eg 'Make as many words as you can by changing the beginning of the word *chat*.'
- provides multiple and varied opportunities for students to manipulate phonemes to make new words, eg using interactive technology (Rose 2006), magnetic letters on a whiteboard, post-its, etc.

Visual processing

The visual processing system gradually builds up detailed visual images of a growing number of words and word parts that can be processed and named automatically, with the aid of the other processing systems. Accuracy, fluency and automaticity in word recognition (ie words become 'sight' words) depend greatly on the completeness and rapidity of a student's visual memory. Students' visual processing is supported by their knowledge of the conventions of print.

Conventions of print

Learning the conventions of print can begin during shared reading prior to letter–sound instruction.

The teacher:

- provides students with opportunities to hear and see the text simultaneously with the teacher pointing to each word as it is read during shared reading
- explicitly teaches students:
  - that words are made up of letters and are of different lengths (eg models writing the individual letters to make up a word)
  - that the spaces between words indicate that a new word is coming up
  - the meaning of punctuation (eg 'a comma tells me to pause')
- provides students with guided practice in identifying words:
  - pointing to each word as it is read aloud by the teacher during shared reading
  - clapping each word in a printed sentence as it is read aloud by the teacher
  - cutting a printed sentence into individual words and reconstructing the sentence
- provides guided practice by asking individual students to come and point to where the teacher should start to read a text during shared reading
- models text directionality, for example:
  - where to go at the end of a line of print when there is only one line, or when there are two or more lines on a page
  - where to start reading and which direction to go for a range of texts
- asks students to move their finger from left to right until they reach the end of the sentence (identifying the full stop)
- starts with texts that have a conventional layout of print, progressing to texts with a range of layouts (eg text in bubbles or text arranged haphazardly on the page)
- uses scaffolding, where necessary, by identifying where to start reading using a visual prompt (eg placing a star on the left of the word)
- provides sufficient practice for students to use directional rules during guided and independent reading
- teaches the terminology of print units (eg letter, word, sentence, exclamation mark).

Recognition of regular and irregular words

Following are examples of effective procedures to support students to read regular and irregular words.

Teachers may use published lists of frequently occurring words to select words for instruction.

Recognition of regular words

The teacher:

- provides extensive practice of identifying and blending letter–sounds (p 16) to read words in isolation and in texts
- prepares students to read words automatically (as 'sight words') by instructing students to sound out 'in their head' and say the word out loud. This should be undertaken with words that students are able to fluently 'sound out'
- draws attention to the orthographic representation of words (ie the order of letters in words/the shape of words)
- assists students to remember words by programming corresponding:
  - spelling, copying and writing activities (Rose 2006)
  - match-to-sample activities
  - games such as Concentration, Snap, Fish
- decreases the amount of time between presenting a word and prompting the student to say the word to increase fluency.

Recognition of irregular words

The teacher:

- models reading irregular words (words that are difficult to work out using letter–sound relationships) as sight words, eg 'This word says *the.* I do not sound it out. I remember how it looks. I look at the word and say *the*.'
- introduces high-frequency irregular words (such as 'the', 'here', 'was', 'where', 'use' etc) before irregular words that occur less frequently in text, emphasising that they are words we don't sound out but say straight away
- uses the texts that students are reading to determine the order of introduction of irregular words
- separates similar words or words that may cause confusion, eg was–saw, of–off, were–where
- teaches words which include the same word parts and sound the same (rhyme) together, eg some–come, do–to, go–so
- reinforces the visual features of a word
- provides a high level of exposure and practice for target words.

Fluency

Fluency enables students to read text with ease, supporting them to focus sufficient working memory on meaning.

Fluent readers are able to:

- recognise a high proportion of whole words automatically (Chard et al 2002; Rose 2006) through the visual processing system
- decode words that they do not know using letter–sound relationships (p 11) (Rose 2006)
- group or chunk words together, pausing after phrases, clauses and sentences to assist them to gain meaning from what they read (Chard et al 2002).

To increase students' reading fluency, the teacher:

- explains that fluency assists students to focus on the meaning of text
- regularly models reading fluently and with expression to demonstrate that a reader's voice can help the text make sense
- explains why their voice is changing (eg pausing, raising, lowering) during shared reading
- provides regular fluency activities, eg repeated reading, choral reading of patterned or predictable texts, independent reading with a high level of success
- encourages students to read more fluently and with expression
- provides additional practice for students who are not achieving oral reading fluency criteria as appropriate to their stage.

Repeated reading

The teacher provides students with the opportunity to re-read the same passage three to five times. Re-reading a passage reduces the demands on memory, enabling students to focus on text meaning. Repeated reading is most effective when it is paired with comprehension activities. This requires students to focus on the meaning of the text as they read (Chard et al 2002), which is the ultimate goal of reading.

The teacher reinforces the importance of reading accurately and corrects words that are read incorrectly. The teacher asks students to re-read sentences in which they made an error.

The teacher may read the passage or provide students with a recorded passage prior to asking the student to read the text, so that they can hear how the passage should sound and be phrased.

Graphing a student's oral reading fluency (number of words read correctly using a one-minute sample) for a particular passage can be used to record students' progress and provide motivating feedback.

As a student achieves fluency criteria, the teacher should increase the difficulty of the text that the student is using for repeated reading (Chard et al 2002).

The teacher asks the student to read for one minute from an appropriate text, noting the number of words read correctly in a minute. The level of text difficulty should be kept consistent if the purpose is to assess progress (Mastropieri & Scruggs 2002).

Oral reading fluency criteria in correct words per minute (cwpm)
(Carnine et al 2010)

Stage	Mid Stage 1	Later Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Correct words per minute (cwpm)	45–60	75–110	120–150	150+

Comprehension

The basis for early reading comprehension is oral comprehension. Before learning to read, students develop oral comprehension through speaking and listening. As students develop decoding skills and link written language to their knowledge of oral language, reading comprehension develops (Rose 2006; National Inquiry 2005).

To be able to comprehend a text, students need to understand most of the vocabulary (Speaking and listening p 35) it contains.

One of the best predictors of reading comprehension is a student's ability to decode with accuracy and fluency (Justice 2006). Fluent reading enables students to focus on meaning and 'read to learn' thus extending their vocabulary and general knowledge.

Effective readers have a purpose for their reading and use their knowledge of vocabulary and language structures to support their understanding. Effective readers also use a range of learning strategies to support their comprehension (p 27).

Following are examples of how teachers may utilise effective procedures to support students in the development of knowledge, skills and strategies for comprehension.

Oral comprehension

The teacher uses shared reading to model strategies to support comprehension. The teacher:

- models reading with fluency
- identifies and reflects on language structures and features of the text type (Curriculum Corporation 2005), for example:
  - text organisation
  - author's language, eg 'I know that this sentence expresses the author's opinion as she uses the words *believe* and *feel*'
- provides opportunities for active involvement by asking students to repeat parts of the text and answer questions based on the text
- leads discussion about meaning/content, helping students to relate content to their own experiences or other texts with which they are familiar
- re-reads a text a 'chunk' at a time, asking questions at different levels of comprehension about each chunk. The chunks should be based on a sentence, progressing to a paragraph and then several paragraphs, etc
- supports students to identify the main idea, eg 'if it tells about the whole passage, it is the main idea'
- encourages students to ask questions about the text
- models how to use contextual cues to work out the meaning of unknown vocabulary.

Levels of comprehension

(Curriculum Corporation 2005)

Literal	An understanding of what is directly stated in a text
Inferential	Going beyond what is directly stated in a text to draw references or to identify relationships
Evaluative/Applied	Making a judgement or interpretation of a text or part of a text. This might involve: • identifying an author's purpose • applying information to new contexts • identifying fact or opinion • making generalisations • further exploring information and ideas • responding emotionally to a text

Vocabulary

Word learning from text using context cues

The teacher models the process of identifying the meaning of a word using context cues (Beck et al 2002) by:

- reading the passage containing the word
- paraphrasing the passage
- asking students to explain what is happening in the passage (providing tips/hints if required)

- hypothesising a word's meaning considering any context cues (eg definitions, restatements, examples, descriptions)
- using word parts (where appropriate) to assist with working out the meaning
- asking if there are other possible meanings for the word that would make sense in the passage
- summarising what is known, bringing all the information together
- reinforcing that sometimes students will not be able to work out a word's meaning from context and may need to refer to external sources of information (including online sources).

Word parts

Prefixes/suffixes, base words and smaller words within compound words can be used to work out the meaning of a word.

Examples of prefixes:

sub – under, *re* – again, *bi* – two, *tele* – far or distant

Examples of suffixes:

est – the most, *less* – without

The teacher:

- models the use of word parts to assist working out the meaning of an unknown word, eg '*un* at the beginning of a word reverses or undoes an action or description. *Un* at the beginning of happy means not happy.'
- models how to break words into parts (morphological analysis) to derive meaning.

Examples of base words with prefixes and suffixes:

For the word *baker*:

Step 1: Find the base word (part of the word the student knows), ie *bake.*

Step 2: Separate the prefixes or suffixes from the base word, ie *bake* + *er.*

Step 3: Determine the meaning of each part. That is:

bake: cook food by putting in a hot oven

er: person who does action (note: *er* has other meanings).

Step 4: Combine both meanings together to predict the meaning of the whole word, ie *baker* is a person who cooks food in an oven.

Step 5: Check whether the predicted meaning makes sense within the context of the sentence or story.

Examples of compound words:

For the word *rowboat*:

Step 1: Separate the compound word into smaller words, ie *row* + *boat.*

Step 2: Define each part:

row: to move a boat by pulling on an oar

boat: a vessel that sits on water.

Step 3: Combine both meanings together to predict the meaning of the whole word, ie a boat with oars and no motor.

Step 4: Check whether the predicted meaning makes sense within the context of the sentence or story.

Reading for purpose

Before students read a text

The teacher:

- makes a decision about:
  - the selection of text, ensuring the text is at an appropriate level for comprehension
  - altenative text formats required by individual students, eg symbols, Braille
  - the purpose for reading, ie what will be the focus of students' learning
  - questions (p 29) that will assist students to understand the text and focus on the intended purpose of reading, eg 'Who is the story about?'
  - vocabulary and/or text features that require pre-teaching
  - the learning strategies (p 27) and instructional scaffolding that may be required to assist students in comprehending a text
- prepares students to focus on comprehending a text by identifying the purpose and audience of the text, reinforcing that the purpose affects the structure, tone, degree of formality and sequence (National Inquiry 2005)
- provides students with scaffolds to assist them in using relevant learning strategies
- encourages students to use metacognitive strategies (Teaching and learning p 23) while they read.

Students:

- preview the text and text organisation to make predictions about the content, or story, using, for example:
  - what they know about the author
  - the front cover and title
  - text structure
  - headings and subheadings
  - introductory and concluding paragraph
  - first sentence in each paragraph
  - pictures, diagrams and captions
- discuss their prediction with peers
- generate questions (p 27) they want to answer.

After students read a text

The teacher:

- models appropriate strategies to support comprehension, for example:
  - summarising
  - graphic organisers
- initially assists students to select important information for summarising by providing subheadings or questions
- provides graphic organisers to:
  - demonstrate features of a text type
  - assist students to identify the relationship between key points or concepts
- asks students to summarise information, monitoring that they have identified the key ideas
- models drawing conclusions for writing purposes, eg 'When I write a newspaper article, I should …'
- discusses the significance of a text, for example:
  - categorises the information in a text
  - generalises to other contexts.

Students:

- summarise the text
- process new material through reflection and elaboration, for example:
  - reflect on their predictions and questions
  - develop questions for further investigation, eg 'Do I need to seek further information, to check if this is fact?'
  - undertake creative tasks based on comprehension material
  - explain the strategies they used to answer questions.

Text selection

Students will have great difficulty with accuracy, fluency, recall and comprehension in reading unless texts are selected at an appropriate level.

Teachers should ensure that texts are appropriate for individual students and the type of reading activity to be undertaken, ie shared, guided and independent.

Shared reading can be used to:

- model reading skills and strategies, including comprehension strategies
- build field knowledge and vocabulary
- highlight particular features of the text.

Guided reading (90%–95% accuracy or at an instructional level) can be used:

- to model and teach students new skills and strategies
- for vocabulary development.

Independent reading (95%+ accuracy and without assistance) can be used to:

- consolidate previously learned skills and strategies
- build fluency
- provide students with opportunities to read for a variety of purposes, including enjoyment.

When selecting texts, teachers may consider the following features, which influence text difficulty:

- text content
  - level of familiarity with field or subject matter
  - number of unfamiliar words per page
  - inclusion of regular words in early stages or letter–sound correspondences that are known or the student is learning
  - number of words that the student is able to recognise automatically, ie avoidance of excessive unknown sight words
  - repetition of words to practice word recognition
  - total number of words
  - language features, eg use of pronouns
  - number of characters, plots, goals, sub-goals
  - explicitness of grammar

- sentences
  - total number per page
  - whether the sentences are controlled (ie pattern repeated) and predictable
- pictures
  - can assist with meaning
  - can provide additional information not conveyed in the written text
- print layout
  - return sweep required
  - print size
  - use of regular print and direction (conventional layout).

Learning strategies for comprehension

Learning strategies for comprehension include (Rose 2006):

- summarising
- student-generated questions
- story maps
- semantic and graphic organisers
- metacognitive strategies
- teacher questioning.

Some learning strategies (below) also include instructional scaffolding to support students in using the strategy.

Summarising a section of text, or a short text
(Carnine et al 2010)

Purpose: Summarising assists students to identify and connect main ideas, remove unnecessary information and focus on the key concepts. Summarising assists students to remember what they have read (Curriculum Corporation 2005).

Instructional scaffolding: procedural prompts

1 Preview the text, look for any headings, subheadings and/or graphics/pictures.
2 Read the text.
3 Re-read the text in 'chunks' and list the key points in your own words.
4 Read the listed points and delete less important points.
5 Combine related points in a single sentence.
6 Re-read the points.
7 Combine more related points into sentences.
8 Order points logically to create a paragraph.
9 Write a summary paragraph.

Student-generated questions

Purpose: Generating questions and seeking answers to the questions assists students to comprehend the text and integrate the information with their existing knowledge structures.

Instructional scaffolding: modelling

The teacher models how to generate questions at different levels of comprehension (p 22) using 'think aloud'.

Story map (narrative)

Purpose: A story map provides students with a visual representation of the main features of a story and story structure. This assists students to understand the relationships in a narrative and to remember the plot.

Instructional scaffolding: teacher questioning

Start: Who are the characters?, where is the story set?

Middle: What is the problem?, how did the character(s) react?, how do they try to solve the problem?

End: What happened in the end?, how was the problem solved?

Graphic organisers

Purpose: Graphic organisers are used to visually illustrate a concept or the relationship between concepts. This learning strategy is particularly useful for informational texts. Graphic organisers may include:

- concept maps (map of reading material)
- diagramming (Curriculum Corporation 2005)
- semantic webs (graphic representation of a word/character).

Metacognitive strategies

Purpose: Metacognitive strategies involve planning, monitoring and evaluating one's thinking while reading. It involves students being aware of what they do and do not understand, and thinking about what they can do to help when they do not understand.

Metacognitive strategies might involve:

Before reading

- determining a purpose for reading
- previewing a text.

During reading

- monitoring understanding and repairing difficulties with comprehension (eg reading faster or slower, re-reading, asking for help).

Teachers may scaffold the use of self-instruction, self-questioning and self-monitoring techniques to support students to use metacognitive strategies during reading.

- Self-instruction, for example:
  - 'I do not understand what I have read, so I will re-read it, this time more slowly'
  - 'I underline the important information'
  - 'I keep reading to see if it helps me to understand and then I go back and re-read the chunk'
- Self-questioning, for example:
  - 'Should I read faster/slower?'
  - 'What is the key idea?'
  - 'Is there an underlying message?'
  - 'How has language been used, and what effect does it have?'

- Self-monitoring, for example:
  - 'Is there anything I don't understand?' 'Do I need to ask for help?'
  - 'Have I found all the information I need?'
  - 'Have I found the answers to the questions I have?'

After reading

- checking understanding, re-reading sections of text if required.

Teacher questioning

Purpose: Teachers use questioning to guide and monitor students' learning. Teachers should ensure that students are able to answer questions at each level of comprehension.

Questions may assist students to:

- activate their prior (background) knowledge
- identify a purpose for reading
- focus their attention on the main idea
- think actively and monitor their comprehension
- review content and relate what they learn to what they know.

Questioning for levels of comprehension

Level of comprehension	Example stems	Example questions
Literal	Who, When, Where, What, Sequence of events	Who stole the bread? What did the traveller do after he arrived? What happened after he found the key?
Inferential	How, Why, In what ways, What if	How do you know the character was hungry? Why was the girl always late?
Evaluative	Imagine, Predict, What do you think, In what ways	What is it the author concluded? Where have you seen this type of text organisation before? Is it evidence or opinion? Is the conclusion based on the evidence?