

# Literacy Instruction in Minnesota: Where we have been and where we need to go

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Minnesota has  
500,000 students  
that are not  
proficient  
Readers



# Minnesota Data

Minnesota has the highest ACT scores in the country and the largest opportunity gap between Black and white students.

Minnesota ranks close to last for graduation of students with disabilities, and last among states for graduation rates of Black students (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018).

Poor reading skills impact academic achievement and is associated with an increased risk of not completing high school, death by suicide, incarceration, anxiety, depression, unemployment or under employment, and problems accessing health care.

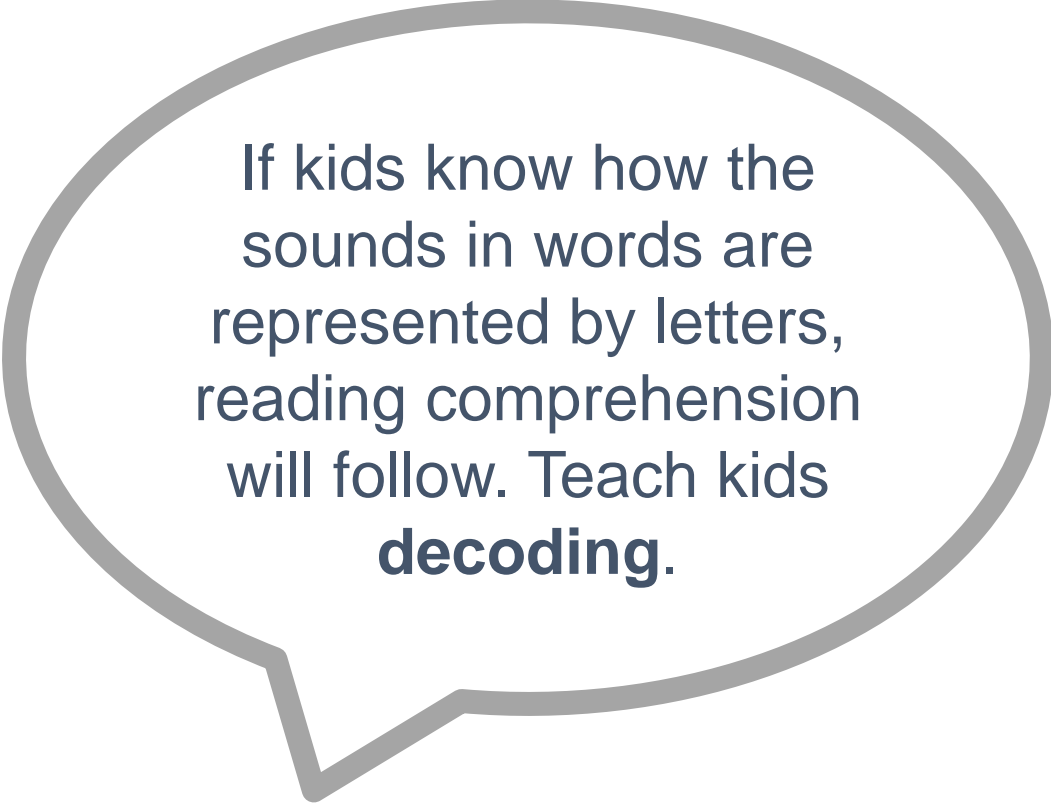
# The Science of Reading: Facts

- Consensus from many related disciplines (developmental psychology, educational psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and reading education) about how students learn to read, what goes wrong when students don't learn, and the type of instruction that works the best for the most students.
- Based on thousands of studies, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, conducted across the world in many languages.
- Challenges older methods of reading instruction that were based on tradition and observation, not evidence.

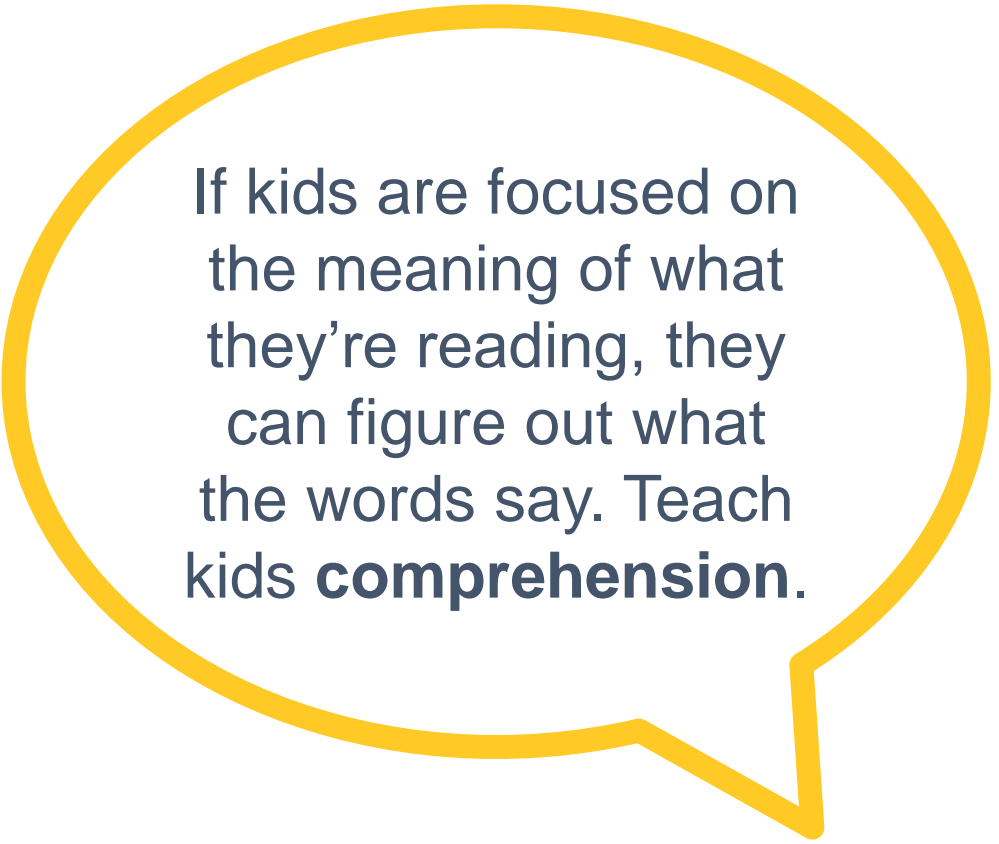
Reading and language arts instruction must include:

- Deliberate, systematic, and explicit teaching of word recognition
- Develop students subject-matter knowledge, vocabulary, sentence comprehension and familiarity with the language in written texts.

# The Great Debate




If kids know how the sounds in words are represented by letters, reading comprehension will follow. Teach kids **decoding**.



If kids are focused on the meaning of what they're reading, they can figure out what the words say. Teach kids **comprehension**.

# Myths and Prevailing Views about Literacy

- Reading is as natural as speaking so immerse students in good literature and print
  - There are a multitude of ways that children learn to read so there isn't one set of instructional principles that will work for all children
  - Teaching young children to look at pictures, skip over the words, or guess at words based on context will develop reading comprehension.
  - Instruction is based on a belief that if children are read to a lot, reading should come easily for them.
  - The teacher's role is to guide students, to create an environment that is conducive to learning how to read: setting up reading groups, reading with kids, helping them find books on their reading level.
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# When this doesn't work.....

**When this approach doesn't work there are typically two responses.**

1. There must be a problem in the home. *The child wasn't read to enough.*
2. There must be a problem in the child. *He or she has a disability.*

**But usually it's neither. Most of the time, when kids can't read, it's because they weren't taught how to do it.**



# The Science of Reading

## LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

Background Knowledge

facts, concepts, etc.

Vocabulary

breadth, precision, links, etc.

Language Structures

syntax, semantics, etc.

Verbal Reasoning

inference, metaphor, etc.

Literacy Knowledge

print concepts, genres, etc.

## WORD RECOGNITION

Phonological Awareness

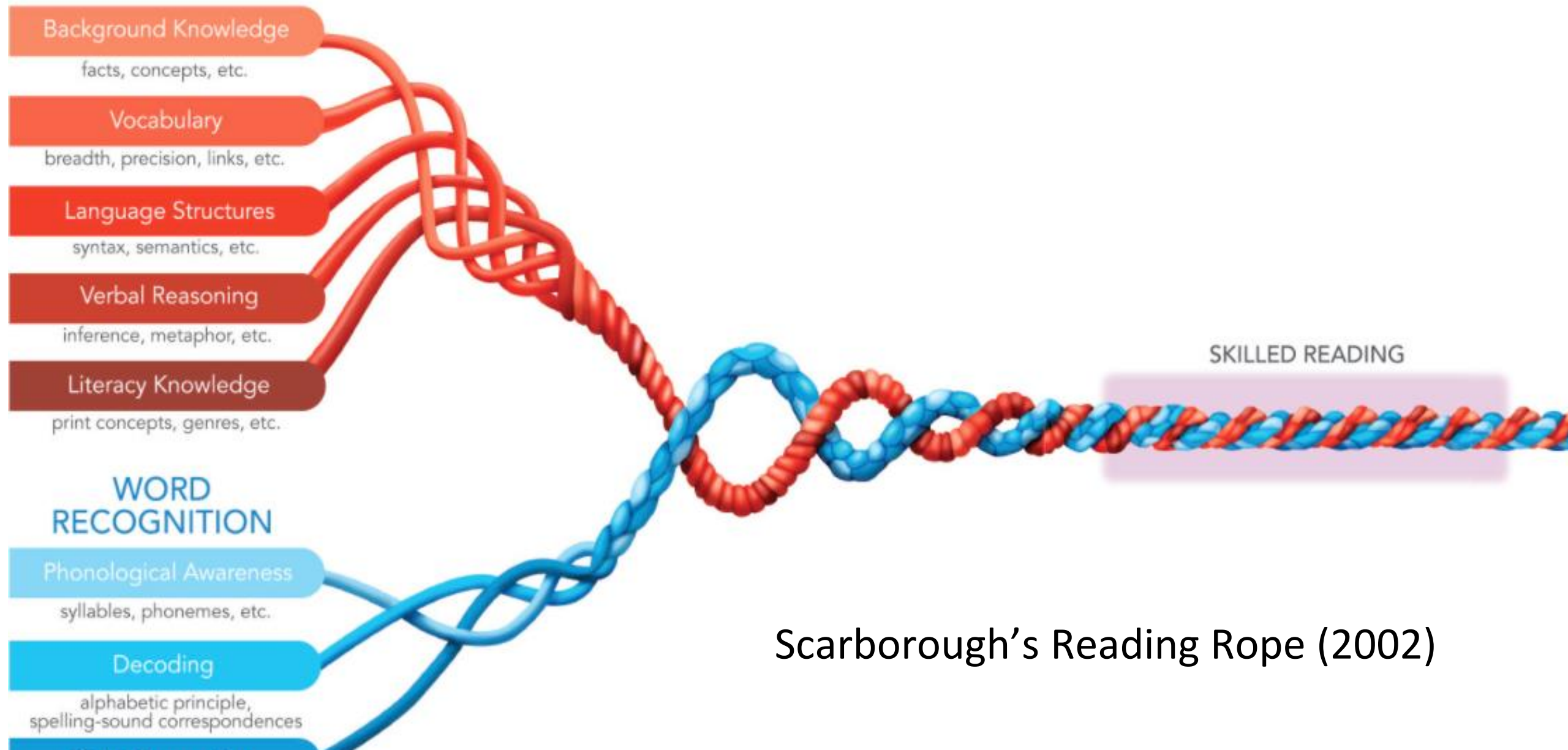
syllables, phonemes, etc.

Decoding

alphabetic principle,  
spelling-sound correspondences

SKILLED READING

Scarborough's Reading Rope (2002)





# Literacy and System Change: What is Needed?



Professional Learning



Curriculum aligned to SOR



Valid and Reliable Assessments to measure student progress



Collaboration through Professional Learning Communities



Sufficient Time Allocated to Instruction



Instructional Coaching to help transfer learning to practice



Questions?  
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