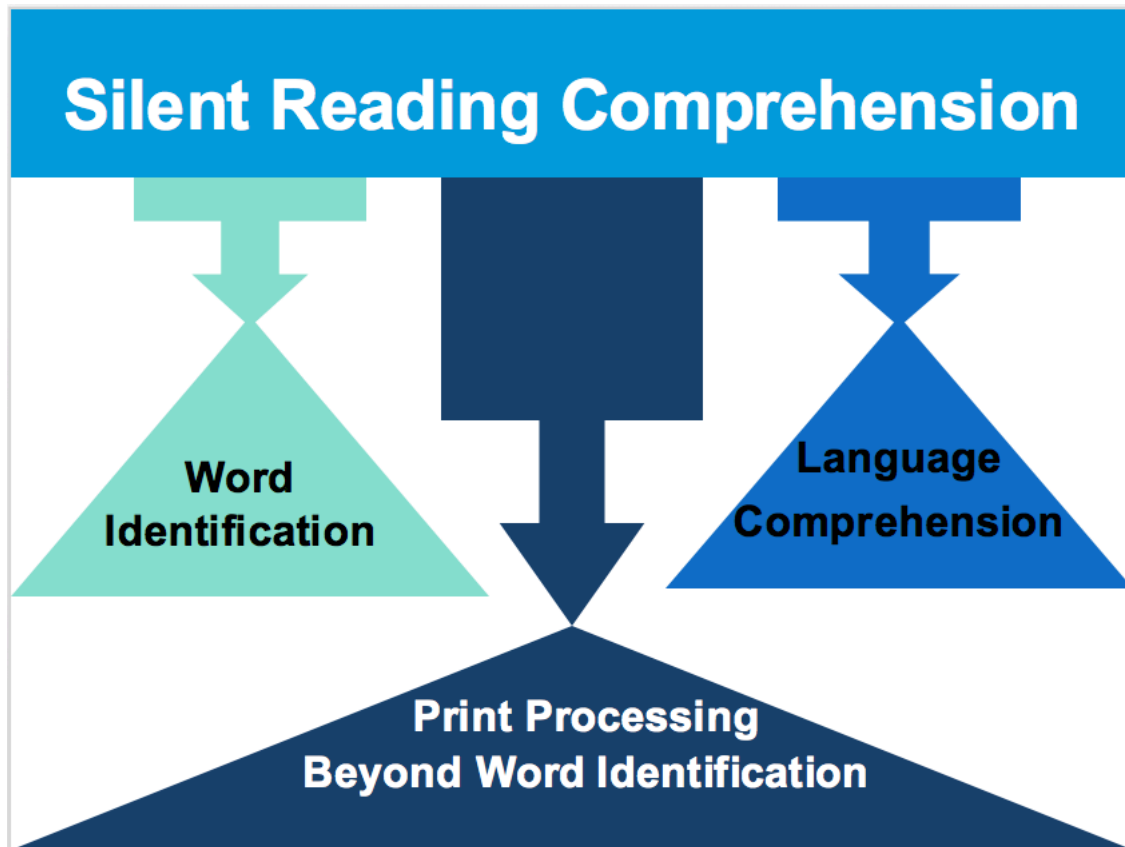


Interpreting the results from the Whole to Part Assessment (using the Basic Reading Inventory)



Cunningham's Model of Silent Reading with Comprehension (1993)

The Whole-to-Part (WTP) assessment model is based on this diagram. In the above model, Cunningham describes the three different skill areas you need to read silently with comprehension. You need word identification, language comprehension and print processing.

The Model

Word identification

We need to be able to identify a lot of words automatically. We also need the skills to figure out words that we don't know automatically. The WTP assessment model allows us to assess whether a word is automatic (move as quickly past the word as you can) or whether a word needs mediation (go back to it and give the students up to 5 seconds). When reading, the majority of words need to be automatic for us to read the text with comprehension, and only a small number can be mediated. We learn words in the working with words block and then we use them in self-selected reading and in writing.

Print processing

This includes skills like using your inner voice, integrating all the parts of reading, print to meaning links, and using efficient eye movements for reading. We learn these skills in the self-selected reading block by reading texts at or below our reading comprehension level.

Language Comprehension

This area consists of two parts. Knowledge of the world – because we need to use our knowledge of the world to understand most texts. And knowledge of texts – because when we read a particular type of text, we understand better how it works and we become more fluent at reading it. This also recognises that writing can be different from speech. These are skills we learn in the guided reading block and apply to self-selected reading.

The Assessment

When completing the WTP assessment we collect data in three areas:

1. Words
2. Reading Comprehension
3. Listening Comprehension

Students should end up with a score in each area. This then tells us what their area of greatest need is.

If a students' lowest score is in Words then we know that the working with words block is the most important. This is the area that is holding them back from reading with comprehension at one grade level higher.

If a students' lowest score is in reading comprehension then we know that print processing is the area that is holding them back from reading with comprehension at one grade level higher. This means that they need lots and lots of practice reading easy texts to develop their print processing skills – and self-selected reading is the most important block for them.

If a students' lowest score is in listening comprehension then we know that language is their area of greatest need. Guided reading then becomes the most important block for them. They need to develop their language skills further so that they can read with comprehension at one grade level higher – which might include ensuring that they have access to a comprehensive AAC system.

If the student has two or three blocks at the same level, then language always wins. If listening comprehension is the highest skill, but reading comprehension and words are tied then words “wins”.

Just because a block is a students' area of greatest need doesn't mean we neglect the other blocks. Sometimes we work really hard on language, only to find that the next year, print processing is the area that is holding the student back. But this information tells us that if we have extra time or if we have to make a decision when a student might leave the classroom to do some extra-curricular activity, which block it is most important that they don't miss. It's also important to note that writing is critical for all students – writing is where they apply the skills they've learned in the other blocks and progress in reading is always limited by progress in writing.

Let's look at some examples:

Mike

Words: 2 (grade 2)

Reading comprehension: 0.25 (pre-primer or halfway through prep)

Listening comprehension: 0.25

Mike's area of greatest need is language, addressed through guided reading. Mike also needs a strong self-selected reading block. This is probably the most common profile we see in students with speech and language impairment or disorders and in special schools.

Sarah

Words: 0.25

Reading comprehension: 0.5 (primer or end of prep)

Listening comprehension: 3

Sarah's area of greatest need is working with words. Her results tell us that she has the language to understand a text at grade 3. She has used her stronger language skills to help fill in the gaps and understand a text at primer level. But she absolutely needs to develop her word knowledge to read with comprehension at one grade level higher. Sarah needs balanced literacy instruction with an emphasis on writing and working with words.

John

Words: 0.25

Reading comprehension: 0.25

Listening comprehension: 5

John's area of greatest need is self-selected reading. Working with words is also critical. John has very strong language skills but needs to develop the mechanics of reading through lots of practice, including lots of opportunities to write.

Tasma

Words: 1

Reading comprehension: 1

Listening comprehension: 1

Tasma's area of greatest need is language – she continues to need good balanced, literacy instruction.

NB just to say it again: all of the students above need balanced literacy instruction. The results just tell us which area(s) of instruction are most critical for them.