

# COMPREHENSION:

## What do we know from research?

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# What is Comprehension?

- **Some definitions**
- **Some connections to vocabulary**

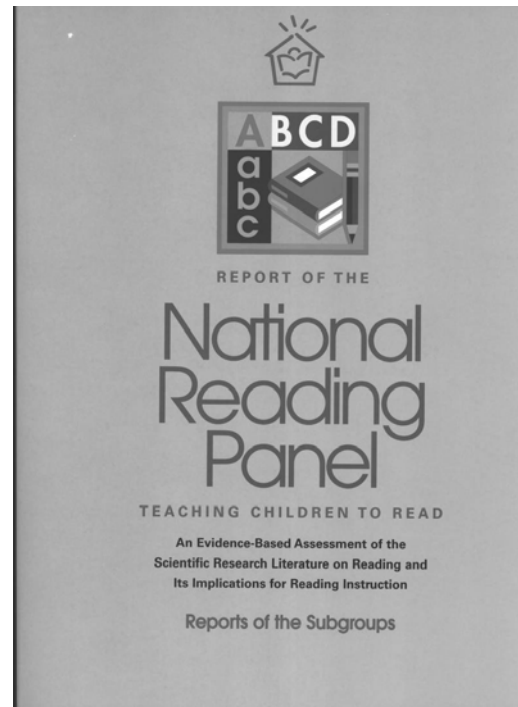
# Davis (1942)

**Comprehension comprises two  
“skills”: Word knowledge or  
vocabulary and reasoning.**

# Whipple (1925)

- **Growth in reading power means, therefore, continuous enriching and enlarging of the reading vocabulary and increasing clarity of discrimination in appreciation of word values**

# National Reading Panel



September 29, 2004

PREL Focus on Comprehension, New York City



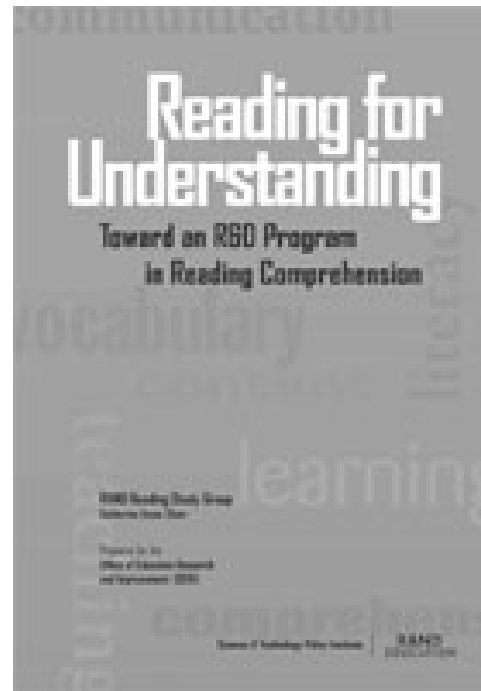
# **National Reading Panel**

**Comprehension is  
making meaning of text**

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# RAND Reading Study Group



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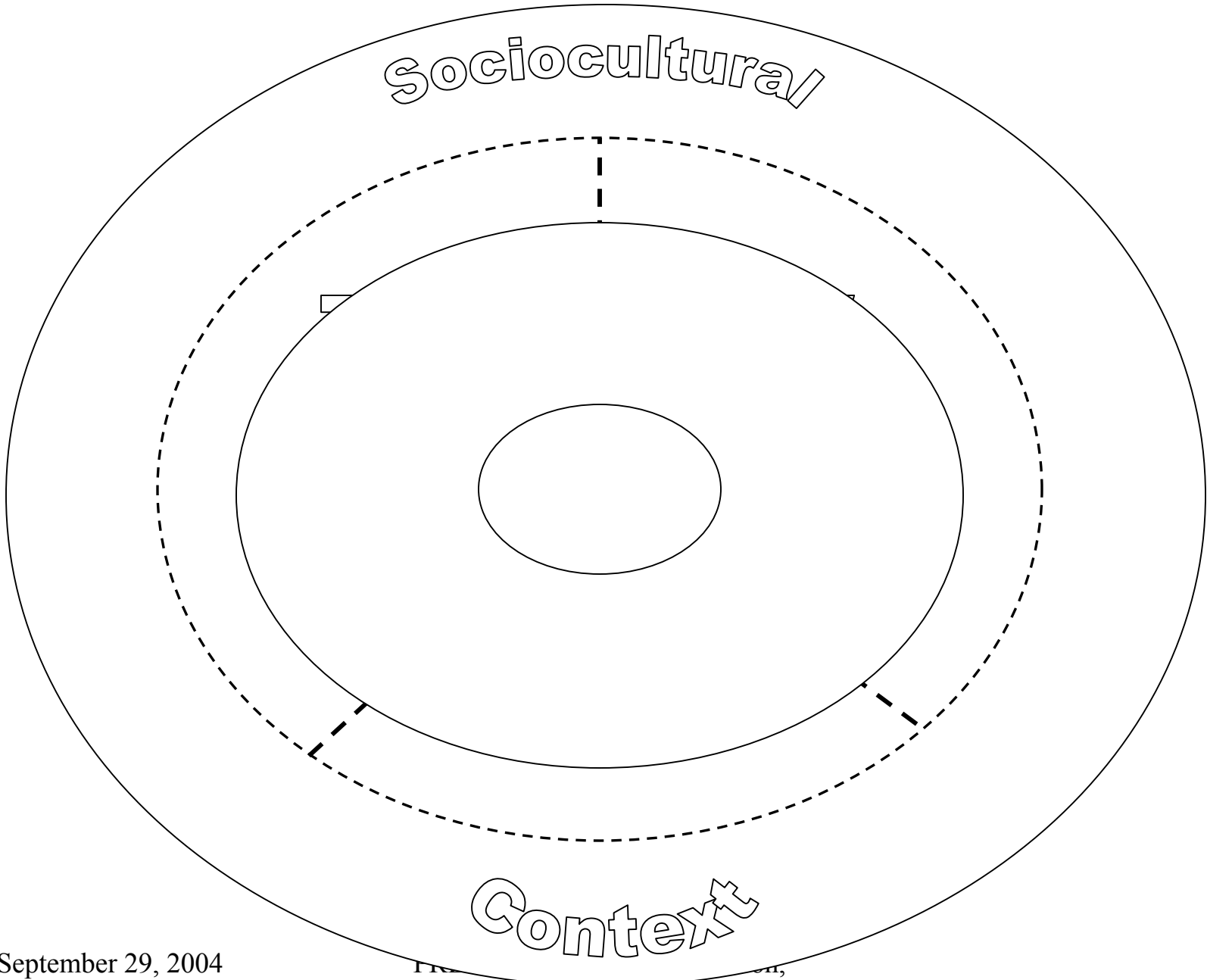
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# **RAND Reading Study Group**

## **Reading comprehension:**

**The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language.**

**Three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading.**



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# **NAEP 2009 Reading Framework**

**Reading is an active and complex process that involves**

- **understanding written text**
- **developing and interpreting meaning**
- **using meaning as appropriate to type of text, purpose, and situation**

# **Program for International Student Assessment**

- **Reading literacy is understanding, using, and reflecting on written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.**

# **Progress in International Reading Literacy Study**

- **The ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Young readers can construct meaning from a variety of texts. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers, and for enjoyment.**




# **What Are Comprehension Strategies?**

**Strategies are specific [cognitive] procedures that guide individuals as they make meaning from text.**

# Comprehension Instruction Categories

 **NRP found 8 effective strategies**

# Comprehension Instruction Categories

-  **Question answering**
-  **Question generation**
-  **Story structure (maps)**

# Comprehension Instruction Categories

 **Comprehension monitoring**

 **Cooperative learning**

 **Summarization**

# Comprehension Instruction Categories

 **Graphic Organizers**

 **Multiple Strategies**

 **Ray Reutzel study**

# Comprehension Instruction

- **Two “systems” of comprehension instruction**
  - **Direct Instruction**
  - **Transactional Strategy Instruction**

# Direct Instruction

- **Teacher directed**
- **Reading as problem-solving**
- **Think strategically**

# **Transactional Strategy Instruction**

- **Teacher facilitates**
- **Students collaborate on joint interpretations**
- **Discussion of processes and strategies**

# Exemplary Studies of Teacher Preparation

- **Book, Duffy, Roehler, Meloth, & Vavrus (1985)**
- **Duffy, Roehler, Sivan, Rackliffe, Book, Meloth, Vavrus, Wesselman, Putnam, & Bassiri (1987)**

# **Exemplary Studies of Teacher Preparation**

- **Anderson (1992)**
- **Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder (1996)**

# **RAND Conclusions**

- **Variability in**
  - **Readers**
  - **Texts**
  - **Tasks**
  - **Contexts**

# Variability in Readers

- **Sociocultural influences**
- **Group differences**
- **Inter-individual differences**
- **Intra-individual differences**

# Variability in Texts

- **Discourse genre**
- **Discourse structure**
- **Media form**
- **Sentence difficulty**
- **Content**
- **Level of engagement**

# Variability in Tasks

- **Purposes**
- **Processing**
- **Consequences**

# **Variability in Contexts**

**Comprehension occurs in dynamic environments that vary in:**

**Instructional quality**

**Peer characteristics**

**Activity definition or execution**

**Activity timing**

**Student goals and motivation**

# Research Should Focus on

- **Comprehension instruction**
- **Teacher preparation**
- **Assessment**

# Knowledge Base About Instruction

- **Fluency improves comprehension**
- **Explicit strategies instruction “works”**
- **Vocabulary instruction is complex**
- **Multiple genres**
- **Student motivation**

# Teacher Education

- **Research translated into instruction**
- **Teachers are central in reforms**

# Assessment

- **Complaints about current assessments**
  - **Inadequately represent complexity of domain**
  - **Conflate comprehension with other capacities**
  - **Not based on understanding of comprehension**
  - **Do not examine relationship between success and dominant group's interests**
  - **Are not useful for teachers**
  - **Tend to narrow the curriculum**
  - **Are one-dimensional and method-dependent**

# Criteria for Assessment System

- **Reflect authentic outcomes**
- **Congruence of assessment and comprehension**
- **Developmental sensitivity**
- **Identify good and poor comprehenders**

# Criteria for Assessment (Cont'd)

- **Instructional sensitivity**
- **Intra-individual differences**
- **Utility for instructional decision making**
- **Social, linguistic, and cultural variation**
- **Grounded in measurement theory**

# **MOTIVATION**

**Cluster of personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading an individual possesses**

# Other Related Concepts

- **Interests**
- **Attitudes**
- **Beliefs**

# **Other Related Concepts**

**Engagement is the extent to which an individual reads to the exclusion of other activities**



# **Students do more sophisticated reading away from classrooms**

- Alvermann (2002)**
- Worthy, Moorman, & Turner (1999)**



## **Strategies that increase self-efficacy**

- activating prior knowledge**
- looking for information**
- comprehending informational texts**
- interpreting literature**
- and self-monitoring**

(Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000)

# **Some Web Sites**

**NRP**

**[www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org)**

**RAND**

**[www.rand.org/multi/achievementforall](http://www.rand.org/multi/achievementforall)**

**NAEP**

**[nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nagb](http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/nagb)**



# THE END

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