

Florida's Reading First Academies: a First Step Toward Teaching Excellence

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Training of Trainers for Reading First Academies
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Beginning with the end in mind:

The Reading First Academies are the first step toward helping all teachers acquire the teaching skills, knowledge, and motivation required to teach every child to read proficiently

They directly support two of the Three Big Ideas of Florida's Reading First Plan for leaving no child behind in reading

1. Increase the quality and consistency of instruction in every K-3 classroom. Provide initial instruction that is appropriate to the needs of the majority of students in the class
2. Conduct timely and valid assessments of reading growth to identify struggling readers
3. Provide high quality, intensive interventions to help struggling readers catch up with their peers

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What do we want our classroom teachers to know how to do?

We want them to know how to teach even difficult children all the skills and knowledge required to read words in text accurately and fluently

We want them to know how to teach vocabulary so that children can fluently identify the meaning of words in multiple contexts

We want them to know how to teach children to think actively while they read in order to construct meaning

We want them to know how to help children acquire a love of reading and a sense of how reading can help them in their lives

Research indicates that students need to acquire skills and knowledge in at least five main areas in order to become proficient readers

Five critical components:

Phonemic Awareness

Phonics

Fluency

Vocabulary

Comprehension strategies

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graph LR; PA[Phonemic Awareness] --> Box1; P[Phonics] --> Box1; F[Fluency] --> Box1; V[Vocabulary] --> Box2; CS[Comprehension strategies] --> Box2; subgraph Box1 [Identifying words accurately and fluently]; end; subgraph Box2 [Constructing meaning once words are identified]; end;
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Identifying words accurately and fluently

Constructing meaning once words are identified

What else do we want our teachers to know how to do

We want them to know how to organize their classrooms so that they have time for differentiated, small group instruction as part of every 90 minute reading block

We want them to know how to use assessment data to identify children in need of immediate, intensive interventions and to help identify their instructional needs.

We want them to know how to create a classroom atmosphere and manage student behavior so that learning opportunities are maximized throughout the day

We want them to know how to help children select reading material that will be enjoyable as well as stimulating for continued growth in reading ability.

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

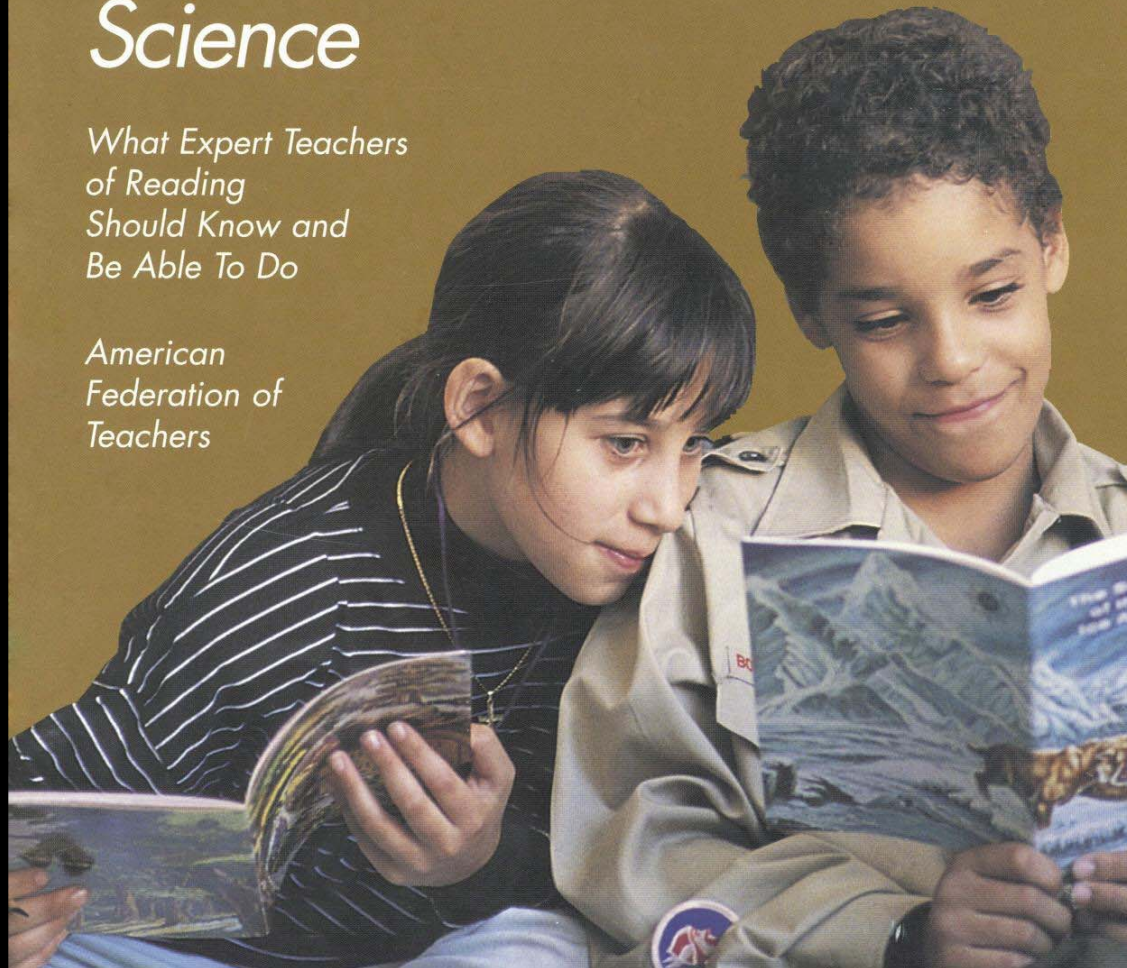
Relentless

in their pursuit of every child

Teaching Reading **Is** Rocket Science

What Expert Teachers
of Reading
Should Know and
Be Able To Do

American
Federation of
Teachers



“.... Although some children will learn to read in spite of incidental teaching, others never learn unless they are taught in an organized, systematic, efficient way by a knowledgeable teacher using a well-designed instructional approach.” (Moats, 1999)

In Florida, the most public measure of our success in teaching all children is performance on the reading portion of the FCAT

Performance on the FCAT assesses the degree to which students have met the state standards in reading, which are focused on how well the student can understand and think about the content and ideas in text

The FCAT is generally considered to be an excellent, demanding test of reading comprehension

The FCAT has some important characteristics

It was specifically created to place high demands on vocabulary and reasoning/inferential skills

“FCAT demands an in-depth understanding and application of information that is not typical of most standardized tests.” (*Lessons Learned*, 2002)

Design specifications call for “application of skills in cognitively challenging situations.”

Proportion of questions requiring “higher order” thinking skills increases from 30% in grade three to 70% in grade 10

The FCAT has some important characteristics

The FCAT may also place special demands on reading fluency, as opposed to “labored accuracy”

Passage length at different levels

3rd grade – 325 words

7th grade – 816 words

10th grade – 1008 words

We recently completed a study to understand what factors were most important in explaining individual differences in performance on the FCAT in 3rd, 7th, and 10th Grade

Gave 2 hour battery of language, reading, nonverbal reasoning, and memory tests to approximately 200 children in each grade at 3 locations in the state

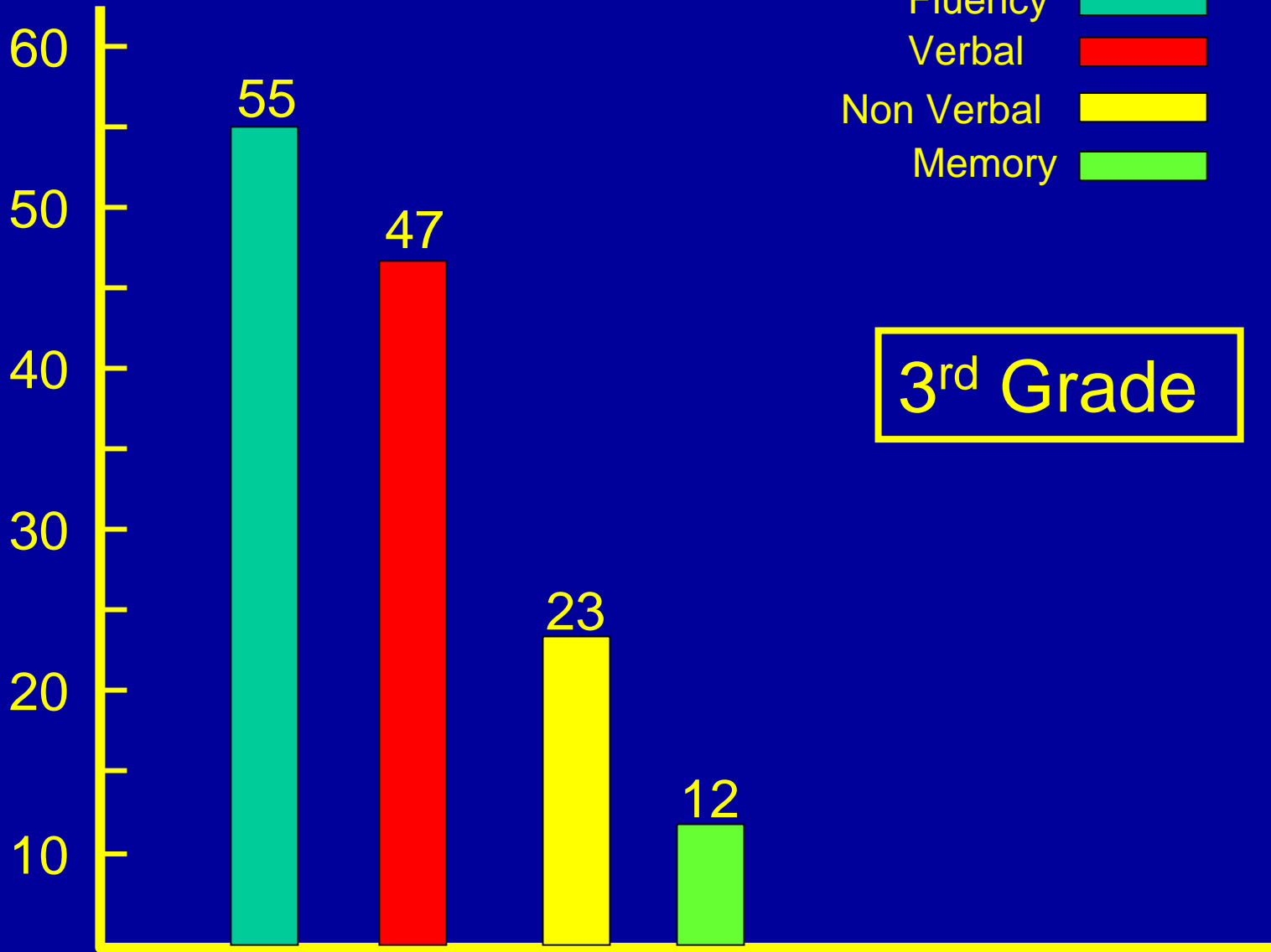
Language – Wisc Vocab and Similarities
Listening comprehension with FCAT passage

Reading– Oral reading fluency, TOWRE, Gray Oral Reading Test

NV Reasoning – Wisc Matrix Reasoning, Block Design

Working Memory– Listening span, Reading Span

Percent of variance accounted for



- Fluency
- Verbal
- Non Verbal
- Memory

3rd Grade

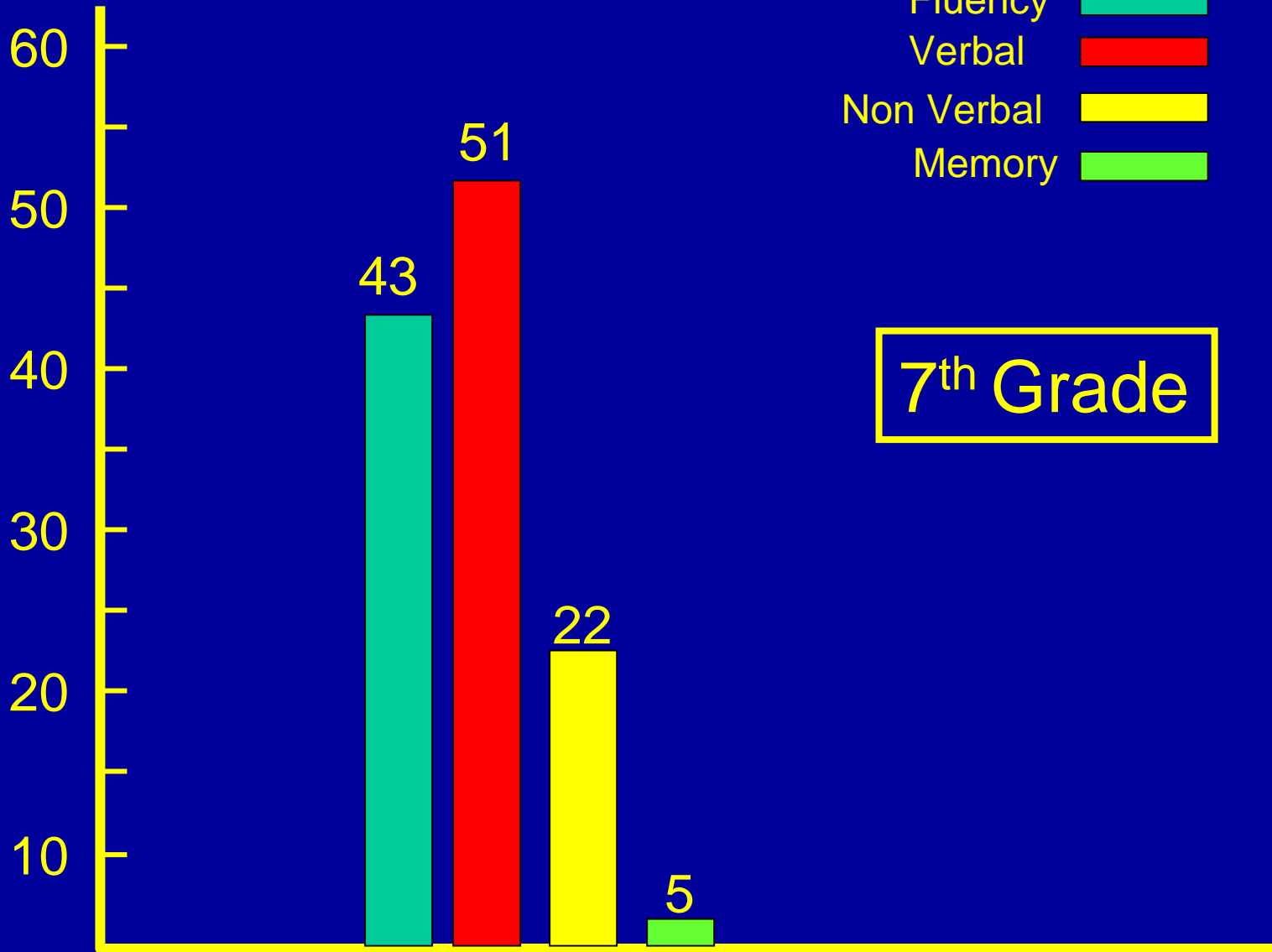
Dominance Results

Fluency completely dominated Language,
Nonverbal Reasoning, and Memory

Language completely dominated
Nonverbal Reasoning and Memory

Nonverbal Reasoning and Memory were
equally (un)dominate.

Percent of variance accounted for



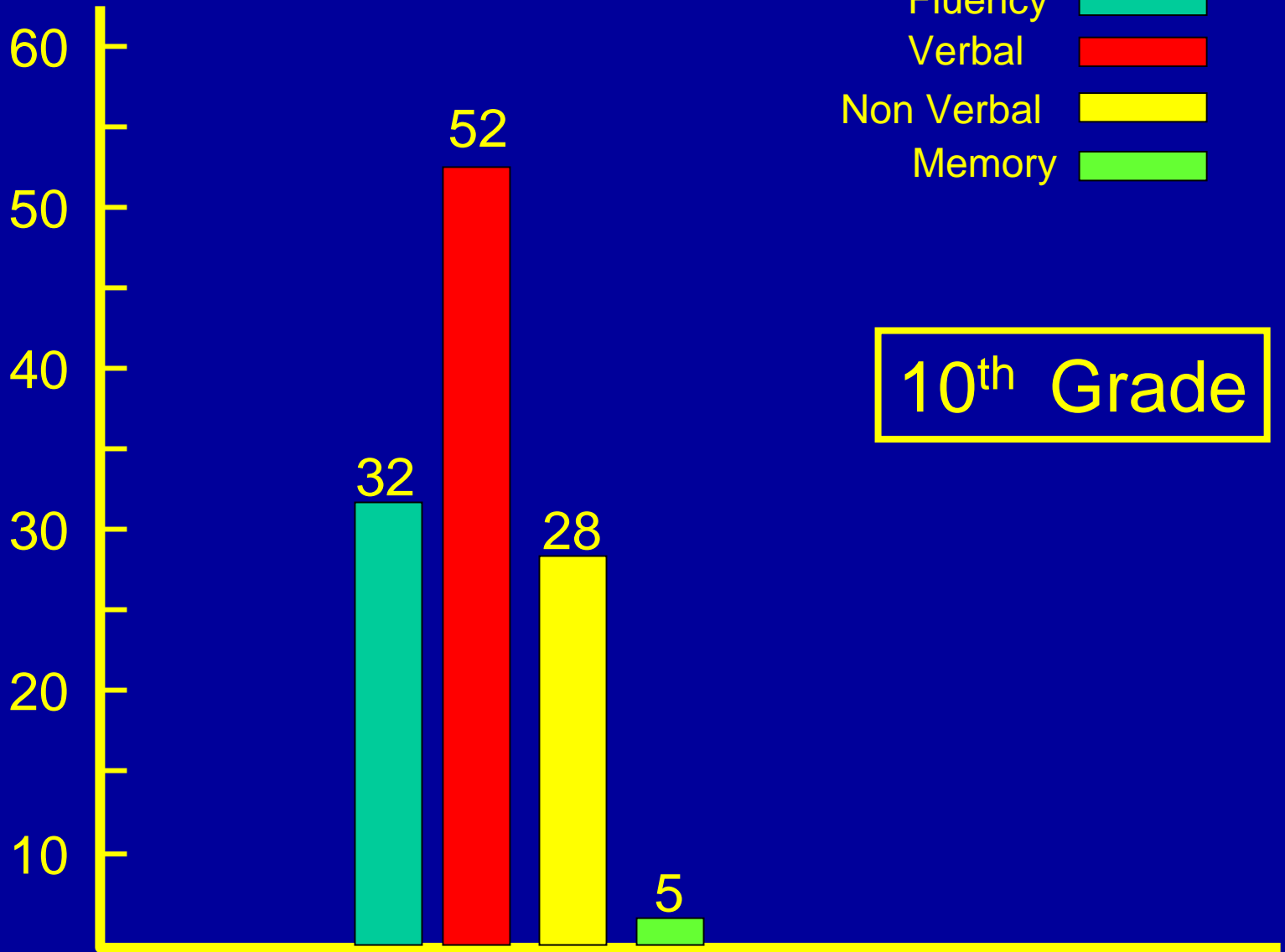
- Fluency
- Verbal
- Non Verbal
- Memory

7th Grade

Dominance Results

- Dominance was not established between fluency and verbal knowledge/reasoning, but both completely dominated nonverbal reasoning and memory

Percent of variance accounted for



10th Grade

Dominance Results

- Verbal knowledge and reasoning completely dominated fluency and memory. Fluency completely dominated memory.

What skills are particularly deficient in level 1 and level 2 readers in 3rd grade?

<u>Skill/ability</u>	<u>FCAT Performance Level</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
WPM on FCAT	54	92	102	119	148
WPM on DIBELS	61	96	111	132	155
Fluency percentile	6 th	32 th	56 th	78 th	93 rd
Phonemic decoding	25 th	45 th	59 th	74 th	91 st
Verbal knowledge/ reasoning	42 nd	59 th	72 nd	91 st	98 th

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

Let no child “escape” from first grade without being proficient in phonemic decoding skills

Why is it important for children to acquire good phonemic decoding skills (phonics) early in reading development?

Because learning to read involves *everyday* encounters with words the child has never before seen in print.

Phonemic analysis provides the most important single clue to the identity of unknown words in print.

Facts about reading from scientific research:

To be a fluent reader, a child must be able to recognize most of the words in a passage “by sight”

Children must correctly identify words 3-8 times before they become “sight words”

Children must make accurate first guesses when they encounter new words, or the growth of their “sight word vocabulary” will be delayed—they will not become fluent readers

Facts about reading from scientific research:

The most efficient way to make an “accurate first guess” of the identity of a new word is:

First, do phonemic analysis and try an approximate pronunciation

Then, close in on the exact right word by selecting a word with the right sounds in it, that also makes sense in the passage

(chapter 10, Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children
(2000))

Words likely
to be
encountered
for the first
time in first
grade

animal

faster

happy

never

time

sleep

rabbit

Words likely
to be
encountered
for the first
time in
second grade

amaze

beach

comfortable

example

interesting

grease

stiff

sweep

3rd Grade FCAT passage

_____ the middle _____, it was the
_____ for a _____ to wear his full
set of _____ whenever he
_____ in _____ - even in times
of _____! When a _____ believed
he was _____ friends, he would
_____ his _____. This _____
of _____ showed that the
_____ felt _____ and safe.

3rd Grade FCAT passage

During the middle ages, it was the custom for a knight to wear his full set of armor whenever he appeared in public - even in times of peace!

When a knight believed he was among friends, he would remove his helmet.

This symbol of friendship showed that the knight felt welcome and safe.

After reviewing recent educational, psychological, linguistic, and neurobiological research on reading, 5 eminent scientists recently concluded:

“From all these different perspectives, two inescapable conclusions emerge. The first is that mastering the alphabetic principle is essential to becoming proficient in the skill of reading....”

and the second is that instructional techniques (namely phonics) that teach this principle directly are more effective than those that do not.” (Rayner, et al., 2001)

Raynor, K., Foorman, B.R., Perfetti, C.A., Pesetsky, D., & Seidenberg, M.S. 2001. How psychological science informs the teaching of reading. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 2: 31-73.

Because of the findings from scientifically based research in reading, we are asking teachers to change the way many have been teaching reading in their classrooms.

The most significant change will be toward instruction that teaches each of the major components in a more systematic and explicit way.

What do we mean by systematic and explicit?

Systematic

Guided by a scope and sequence that is comprehensive, that teaches all the appropriate knowledge and skills in a “programmatically scaffolded” manner

Programmatic Scaffolding

The program of instruction is carefully sequenced so that students are explicitly taught the skills and knowledge they need for each new task they are asked to perform

Oral blending skills before blending printed words

Awareness of phonemes before learning how they are represented in print

Grapheme-phoneme knowledge before decoding

Vocabulary instruction before reading for meaning

Strategies for oral language comprehension that support reading comprehension

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Explicit

“First graders who are at risk for failure in learning to read do not discover what teachers leave unsaid about the complexities of word learning. As a result, it is important to directly teach them procedures for learning words” (Gaskins, et al., 1997)



Short a as in man, hand, and pat



The short /a/ sound, as in *sat*, *fat*, and *cat*

The very best teachers of children who have difficulties learning to read are

Relentless

Beginning in Kindergarten, teach vocabulary and thinking skills as intensely, and robustly as possible

BRINGING WORDS
Robust
Vocabulary
Instruction
TO LIFE

ISABEL L. BECK

MARGARET G. McKEOWN

LINDA KUCAN

Bringing
Words to Life

Isabel Beck

M. McKeown

L. Kucan

Guilford Press

Big ideas from “Bringing Words to Life”

First-grade children from higher SES groups know about twice as many words as lower SES children

High school seniors near the top of their class knew about four times as many words as their lower performing classmates

High-knowledge third graders have vocabularies about equal to lowest-performing 12th graders

Individual differences in vocabulary have a powerful impact on reading comprehension beginning about third grade

Big ideas from “Bringing Words to Life”

Poor children, who enter school with vocabulary deficiencies have a particularly difficult time learning words from “context”

Research has discovered much more powerful ways of teaching vocabulary than are typically used in classrooms

A “robust” approach to vocabulary instruction involves directly explaining the meanings of words along with thought-provoking, playful, interactive follow-up.

The Academies are an important first step..but they will not be sufficient

Professional development for teachers

Reading First Academies –four days

Ongoing leadership structure for professional development—Director of Professional Development, Regional Professional Development Coordinators

Job-embedded professional development in the classrooms through expert coaches – leading to broad and deep learning and behavior change

Professional development through providers at the District level – offered on an ongoing basis across six years

The role of a high quality core reading program in professional development for teachers

Each Reading First School is required to implement a core reading curriculum at each grade level that follows instructional principles and focuses on content consistent with findings from recent research on reading.

“A well developed curriculum that blends explicit instructional strategies within a coherent instructional design acts as an important scaffold to guide teacher behaviors so they will be more consistent with the principles of effective instruction.”

“In general, it appears that the clarity and organization of research-based components in the curriculum make a difference to reading outcomes. However, out-of-the-box implementations of basal reading programs are not likely to be effective. Again, ongoing professional development that provides the rationale for each component of reading (and spelling) instruction and provides classroom coaching to deal with the pacing of instruction, classroom management, and grouping of students is what helps teachers develop successful readers. Expecting teachers to put aside their basal readers and create their own research-based curricula is not realistic given the lack of resources and of the knowledge base to do so.” (Rayner, et al., 2001)

“There are many programs that, if properly implemented, could help a school move in the right direction, but nothing could ever take the place of a knowledgeable and talented teacher” (Wren, 2002)

“Research has repeatedly indicated that the single most important variable in any reading program is the knowledge and skill of the teacher implementing the program...”

“The right answer is the hard answer – The solution for helping struggling readers succeed is to cultivate a population of teachers who are very knowledgeable about how children learn to read and who are adept at applying their understanding of reading acquisition to the assessment and instruction of individual children.”

Reading First is the most difficult educational challenge any of us have ever faced

It will require relentless pursuit of the goal of teaching all children what they need to know to be good readers....



Thank You

References Used:

Rayner, K. et al. How should reading be taught? *Scientific American*, March, 2002

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Rayner, K. et al., (2001). How psychological science informs the teaching of reading. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 2, 31-74.

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