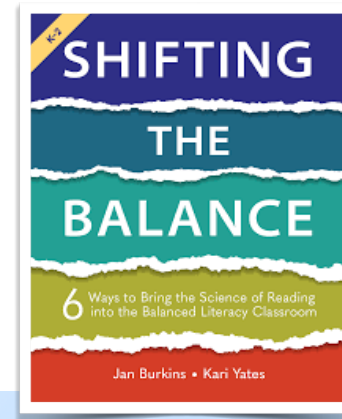


Shifting the Balance: Language Comprehension

Presenter:
Jen Kelly

Today we are exploring how we can...

- * support students' emergent language skills using research-based practices from the book, *Shifting the Balance*



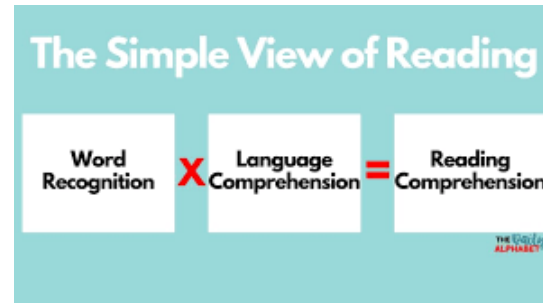
Rethinking How Reading Comprehension Begins

★ By listening comprehension, we are not referring to how well children follow directions or to how well they can sit for us to offer long explanations. We are referring, instead, to their capacity to understand spoken language. This capacity develops through conversation, through hearing and sharing personal stories, and through interactions with rich texts.

★ Listening comprehension—which is built through language interaction—is, after all, an essential precondition of reading comprehension.

The Simple View of Reading

Tunmer and Gough, 1986



Why is talk so important?

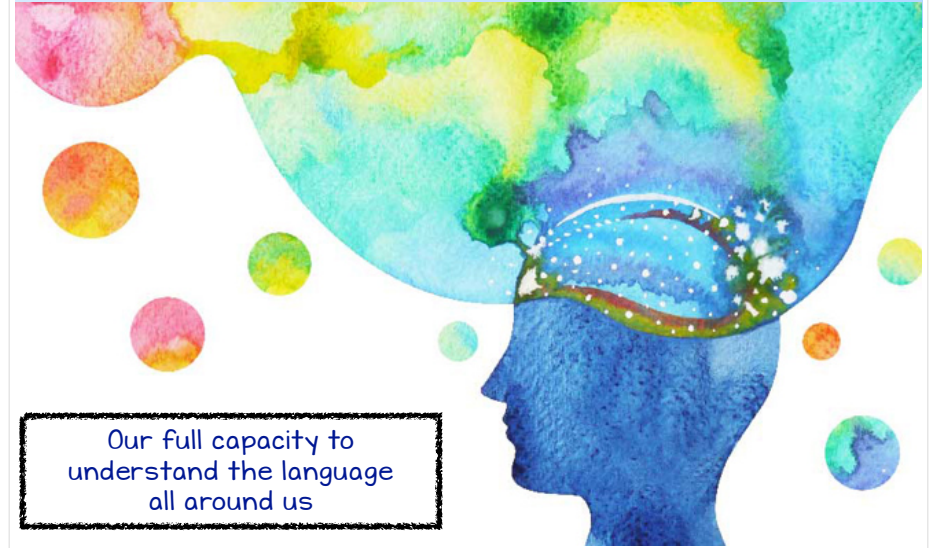
- ✓ Talk provides a **window** into student thinking
- ✓ Talk supports **robust learning** by **boosting memory**, providing richer associations, and **supporting language development**
- ✓ Talk supports **deeper reasoning** and encourages students to **reason with evidence**
- ✓ Talk **primes students** in scientific thinking
- ✓ Talk supports the **development of social skills** and **encourages risk-taking** with **huge payoffs** for learning

If they can't say it, they won't be able to read or write it. - Marie Clay

Adapted from - Talk Science Primer by Sarah Michaels & Cathy O'Connor. TERC (Technical Education Research Centers)



The Importance of Language Comprehension



Our full capacity to understand the language all around us

Shifting the Balance - Burkins & Yates



Language Comprehension

- * Reading comprehension begins with spoken language
- * To comprehend a text, enough words on the page have to activate language we already have

"We are natural born sense-makers"
-Burkins



Shifting the Balance - Burkins & Yates



Language Comprehension

"Comprehension problems - which tend to be linked to limited language skills - often stay hidden until later grades (Nation et al. 2004) when the complexity of the text begins to exceed the limits of the child's listening comprehension."



Shifting the Balance - Burkins & Yates



Shift:

Treat oral language development as an essential ingredient for comprehension.

Gather what you need to support language comprehension:

- ✓ **Read-aloud texts**
 - ★ choose texts that will stretch listening comprehension by providing exposure to rich ideas, wide vocabulary, background knowledge, and novel language structures
- ✓ **Text sets**
 - ★ built around a particular topic/theme, representing a range of text complexity. These will provide multiple entry points for students to build background knowledge, acquire language structures, and expand vocabulary around key topics
- ✓ **A collection of high-leverage instructional routines**
 - ★ for building and extending both intentional and incidental classroom conversations – including reading aloud and using interesting words

Shift:

Treat oral language development as an essential ingredient for comprehension.

High-leverage instructional routines for language development:

- ✓ Make space for planned and incidental conversation
- ✓ Ask quality questions
- ✓ Provide wait time
- ✓ Repeat and expand
- ✓ Use interesting words
- ✓ Read aloud
- ✓ Teach with text sets to build content area knowledge

High-Leverage Instructional Routines

Routine, Purpose, Examples – the What, the Why, the How

- ✓ **Make space for planned and incidental conversation**
 - ★ Leverage conversation throughout the day and give children practice articulating ideas, listening, adding on, and asking relevant questions
 - ★ Examples:
 - Lets talk about...
 - This is so interesting. Let's talk more about it...
 - Tell us about what just happened.
 - Talk to your partner about...
 - Who wants to add on to ___?

- ✓ **Ask quality questions**
 - ★ To ensure students have opportunities for higher-level thinking, such as describing, explaining, comparing, evaluating, and inferring.
 - ★ Examples:
 - What do you think about...?
 - How are ___ and ___ alike or different?
 - Why do you think that is more important?
 - Explain what really happened.

High-Leverage Instructional Routines

Routine, Purpose, Examples – the What, the Why, the How

- ✓ **Provide wait time**
 - ★ To give children the time they need to process information, formulate thoughts, and organize their language to express their ideas
 - ★ Examples:
 - *After posing a question, wait*
 - (Silence)
 - I'll give you some time to think about what you want to say
 - Let your partner think.

- ✓ **Repeat and expand**
 - ★ To reinforce, extend, and clarify student language
 - ★ Examples:
 - Wow, that's so interesting. You had..
 - So you...
 - I don't understand. Tell me more about...

