

# Video 8 – Summary

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Hello again colleagues, to this, a summary, and further actions, section of the professional development videos on the revised Ontario Language Arts curriculum, 2023. I will first summarise here what we have covered in the preceding videos, and the role of the science behind this work, before considering some prominent teaching themes that emerge across the 6 videos. Finally, we will consider the ‘next steps’, and other professional learning you might consider from here.

### **1. What have we covered?**

You have had the opportunity to explore six substantive videos on all aspects of Strand B of the revised Ontario curriculum. These were: (phonological awareness (especially phonemes) and grapheme (letter and letter cluster) to phoneme correspondences, and how they work together to help phonic decoding. In video 3 we then explored the specifics of phonic decoding. Video 4 explored the role of distributed word meanings across words (‘morphology’, as shown in the appearance of ‘sign’ in design resign signature etc.), and explored how morphology may play a role, alongside phonics in the complex spelling system of English. In video 5 we explored specific word meanings (vocabulary and its role in supporting comprehension), and in the final video 6 we explored key features of reading fluency. Fluency is intimately related to comprehension, we learned.

Each video was 30-45 mins or so on each topic to make accessible teacher friendly explanations and included ‘multi-modal’ approaches incorporating text and images to support the spoken word.

All content was closely linked to the Language Foundations Continuum for Reading and Writing in the revised elementary Language curriculum to show their relevance.

The videos were sequential and ordered in logical ways modeling the ways the skills themselves likely develop. For example, Phoneme Awareness then grapheme-to-phoneme correspondences in videos 1 and 2 come together in development in phonic decoding in video 3.

It is likely that there are multiple components to reading in the complex spelling system of English – phonic skills are central and foundational, but then vocabulary and morphology are both implicated. We learned it is not one or the other, but both phonology and meanings work together to support word reading and spelling development albeit in very specific ways. We learned that understanding the text at a deep level is key to advanced fluency, and that fluency draws upon effortless efficient use of all of the components of word reading we have considered.

## 2. Evidence-based research reading instruction

A key part of this video series is to allow you to see the background or context research that has led to these curriculum statements, through a gentle introduction to some of the relevant reading research. Mainly this has been the research findings of what we know of evidence-based practice from studies carried out in schools and related contexts. Where relevant, complementary findings of studies of brain imaging, eye movements, computer simulations, comparisons across languages, and spelling systems as varied as European alphabets and Chinese scripts, and linguistics are made to show how reading occurs in young human brains.

We have used this body of scientific work to review specific questions of What? to whom? how much time to be devoted? and when? - questions teachers specifically ask about teaching approaches are specifically addressed in each video.

We have noted where there is and where there is not strong guiding scientific evidence, as well as some of the more nuanced texture of where we are fairly certain, and where there is some but less secure evidence on specific questions.

We have noted this science is also constantly evolving. New information is added, some is modified. Science is always cumulative.

Importantly we have repeatedly emphasised that the evidence does not lead inevitably to dry, uninspired instruction for teachers. As we have seen before:

*“There is no element of SoR that speaks to required weekly spelling tests, or heavy use of worksheets, or drill and rote learning, or endless homework. There is no evidence that decodable basal readers are essential or that commercial reading schemes are required to raise standards over other evidence-based content. Often the evidence points in quite the other way on many of these ideas. SoR is very much a forward-looking approach that, as the name suggests, follows the science.”*

### **Themes and practices across the videos:**

I emphasize that there exist a number of key themes across learning across the six videos:

- A. Fast and efficient word reading is an incredibly important precursor of text comprehension. Word reading efficiency liberates children to comprehend at the level they could in spoken mediums. Careful acquisition and mastery of the component word meanings and phonemes and graphemes are key to comprehension.
- B. ‘One size fits all’ will not work well in any aspect of teaching. The role of closely connected assessment and teaching is key – assessing where your students are now and differentiating and then repeatedly engaging in assessment-teaching loops emerged over videos. It is one of the most effective practices in all domains. This is

formative assessment by teachers using authentic measures to gear teaching we learned.

- C. HOWEVER, if this is not working, make sure to then assess your program (“Diagnose the teaching”). Multicomponent guidance is given in many videos on this specific topic.
- D. Your knowledge and facility here underpin that of your students. Self-teaching ideas about phonics in an alphabetic system are key to the efficiency we noted above at the word level. This capacity in your students is built on your capacity to convey the key aspects of phonic decoding – especially graphemes, phoneme awareness and morphology.
- E. We have always considered what is effective / not effective in each video. Across videos, active direct instruction with teachers as active change agents in learning contexts is always key. No aspects of reading improve ‘on their own’ or by mere exposure we have found.
- F. Early and preventative evidence-based teaching is the spirit that proves to be most effective in all areas.
- G. Strong connections exist between reading and writing, so teaching both is important. Try also to show students how they are interconnected....
- H. Links to wider curriculum and opportunities to extend lessons learned first in language art curriculum were repeatedly noted. This seeds fluency.
- I. The role of motivation is key – but success, especially early success, is highly motivating.
- J. An eye on wider equity is always present as is the human and humane nature of teaching underpins all the work here.

### **Actions and next steps from here?**

What can I do now? There are a number of ‘next steps’ in your learning you can take now:

1. Make changes to your pedagogy, where suggested by these videos, and see their impact....
2. Seek support from colleagues, a whole school approach, communities of practice. These videos are one part not the complete answer to your professional development needs.
3. Resources (including materials and links suggested at the end of each video). Citations for the research papers are included for those wishing to dig deeper on the evidence cited in this work.

Finally, if you have not yet done so, please complete the video surveys – this will help us to understand how well these tools are working to support you, and to shape further provision.

All the very best as you use evidenced best practice to help shape young lives in a positive way!