



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE
 MEBANE EARLY LITERACY CENTER



MELC Brief Series

Translating Research for Literacy Educators

SCORE 1:
 THE ACTIVE VIEW OF READING



ACTIVE VIEW OF READING

As research on literacy progresses, so does the science behind the science of reading. This continuous improvement process of asking questions, researching, determining impact on student outcomes, and adjusting classroom instruction to align with evidence is a necessary part of science-based fields and potentially, (when applied) results in more students learning to read. In their seminal work, Gough and Tunmer (1986) made an important contribution to the field of literacy by developing the Simple View of Reading (SVR), which holds that decoding (i.e., word recognition) and listening comprehension (e.g., language comprehension, linguistic comprehension) were both required skills for reading. Over a decade later, Scarborough's Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001) further refined the broad components of word recognition

and language comprehension into individual strands that when used automatically and strategically, lead to skilled reading. Fast forward another two decades, with advances in technology and more research available, the Active View of Reading (AVR; Duke & Cartwright, 2021) builds on these models to provide a more accurate and comprehensive model that includes the same constructs of word recognition and language comprehension with the addition of active self regulation and bridging processes.

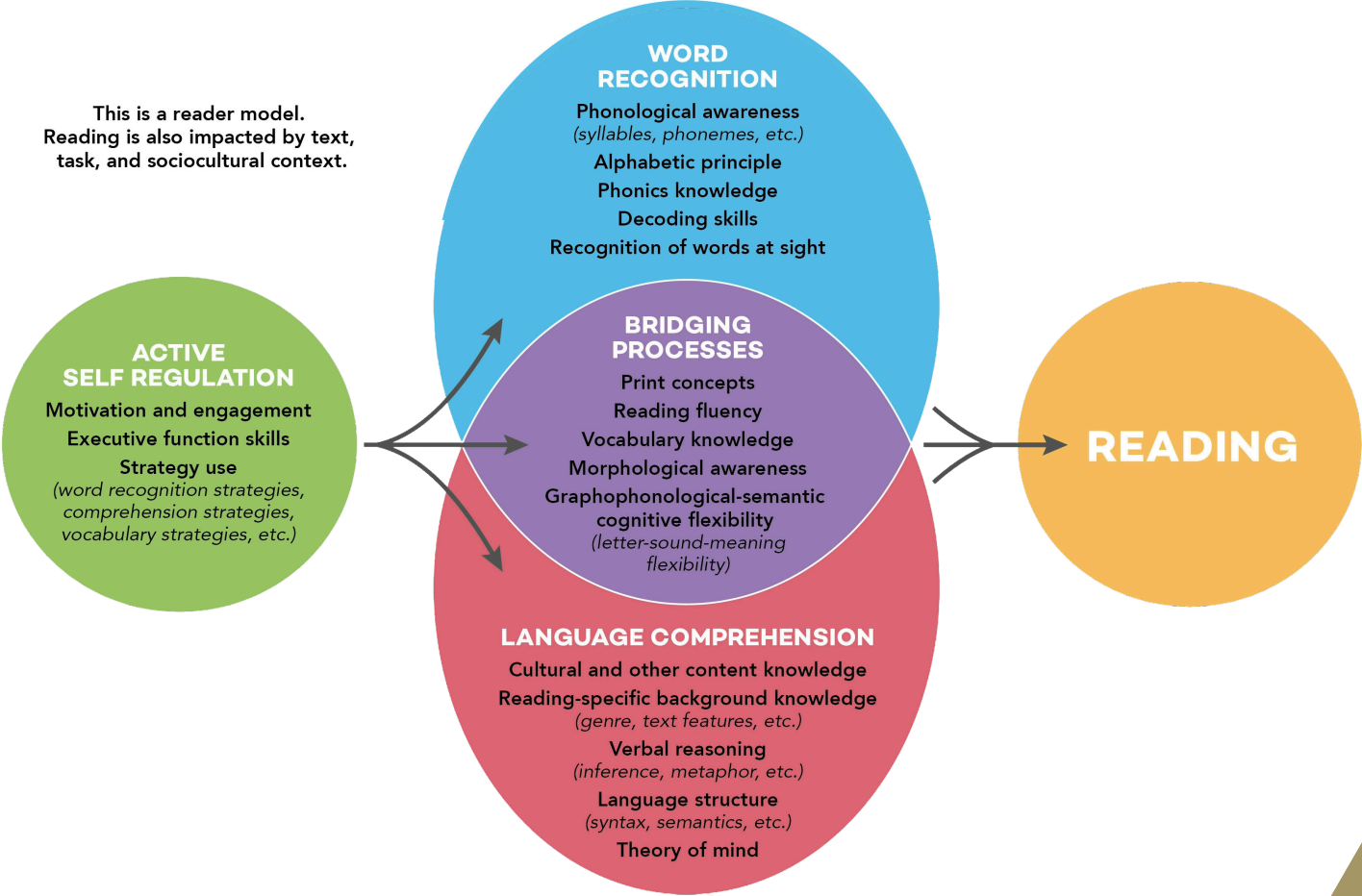
AVR was purposefully designed as a “reader model” meaning the constructs and components within them are skills a) that can be taught, and b) that research has found to improve reading comprehension when taught.

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For specific research findings of each construct, we recommend reading the full article (Duke & Cartwright, 2021) and follow up study (Burns, Duke, & Cartwright, 2023). This brief will provide a relatively concise review of AVR constructs, takeaways, and classroom applications.

ACTIVE VIEW OF READING



Reprinted from “The science of reading progresses: Communicating advances beyond the Simple View of Reading,” by N. K. Duke and K. B. Cartwright, 2021, Reading Research Quarterly, 56(S1), S25-S44. Copyright 2021 Authors. Reprinted with permission.
Note. Several wordings in this model are adapted from Scarborough (2001).

WORD RECOGNITION

Word recognition is the ability to decode and read words. The AVR underlying components include: **phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, phonics knowledge, decoding skills, and recognition of words at sight.** These skills directly impact word reading and reading comprehension, and can be taught using explicit and systematic instruction.

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

Language comprehension is the ability to understand language (spoken or written). In AVR, the underlying component of cultural and content knowledge calls attention to more recent research on the impact of culture and content knowledge on comprehension (moving beyond background knowledge). Theory of mind addresses the impact of social reasoning (understanding the mental states, feelings, emotions, and perspectives of others, such as characters, and even authors) on comprehension. The remaining underlying components include: verbal reasoning (e.g., inferences, metaphors), language structures (e.g., organization of language), and reading-specific background knowledge (e.g., genres, text features). AVR confirms each of these components within language comprehension are processes that can be explicitly taught and uniquely contribute to reading comprehension.

BRIDGING PROCESSES

A significant distinction between AVR and the previous models was discovering that word recognition and language comprehension are not completely separate constructs - they overlap and must be integrated by readers.

Some skills support both word recognition and language comprehension processes and help readers to coordinate these as they work to comprehend texts. This overlap introduced a new construct,

Bridging Processes, which more accurately depicts this connection. The table below provides definitions for constructs of Bridging Processes and examples of how each construct relates to word recognition and language comprehension.

"A significant distinction between AVR and the previous models was discovering that word recognition and language comprehension are not completely separate constructs - they overlap and must be integrated by readers."



BRIDGING PROCESSES: CONSTRUCTS RELATED TO WORD RECOGNITION AND LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

Construct	Word Recognition	Language Comprehension
<p>Vocabulary - understanding the meaning of words, including both breadth (knowing many words) and depth (knowing lots about each word)</p>	<p>Pronouncing heteronyms in connected text (words spelled the same with different pronunciations): Let's resume reading your resume.</p> <p>Orthographic mapping - connecting spelling, sounds/phonemes, and meaning to store new words in memory</p>	<p>Orthographic mapping - connecting spelling, sounds/phonemes, and meaning to store new words in memory</p>
<p>Fluency - reading orally with appropriate rate, accuracy, and prosody</p>	<p>Rate and accuracy reflect decoding ability</p>	<p>Prosody (expression) reflects understanding of grammar, punctuation, and meanings of words, phrases, and longer bits of text</p>
<p>Morphological Awareness - awareness of the smallest units of a word that still have meaning</p>	<p>Multisyllabic word reading - split word into morphemes, decode each morpheme, read the whole word</p>	<p>Multisyllabic word reading - determine meaning of multisyllabic word through meanings of individual morphemes</p>
<p>Graphophonological Semantic Cognitive Flexibility - the ability to think about two aspects of a word, such as phonemes within the word and meaning of the word, and alternate thinking about those aspects in relation to other words</p>	<p>Thinking about and switching between phonemes and meanings of words (i.e., ability to flip between word recognition and language comprehension processes).</p>	<p>Thinking about and switching between phonemes and meaning of a word (i.e., ability to flip between word recognition and language comprehension processes).</p>
<p>Print concepts - understanding how print works in English</p>	<p>Understanding how to read words from left to right, top to bottom</p>	<p>One study found effects of print concepts on comprehension (Piastra et al., 2012); understanding punctuation and phrasing supports comprehension.</p>

ACTIVE SELF-REGULATION

AVR also emphasizes the student's active role in managing reading processes as a central component to learning to read. This construct, Active Self Regulation, refers to how students regulate themselves and coordinate their internal reading processes. In other words, students must keep thinking about what they're reading while using executive function skills, actively engage (think about what and why they are reading), attend to the task, and use strategies while reading. Research has shown that reading-specific EF interventions directly contribute to reading by helping readers manage

aspects of reading, such as cognitive flexibility, working memory, and inhibitory control. Improving motivation and engagement has been shown to have positive effects on reading. Strategy instruction has been extensively researched over the years and consistently shown to improve reading. The constructs in Active Self Regulation have been further defined in the table below.

"Students must keep thinking about what they're reading while using executive function skills, actively engage (think about what and why they are reading), attend to the task, and use strategies while reading."



ACTIVE SELF-REGULATION CONSTRUCTS

Construct	Definition	Application or Example
Motivation and engagement	<p>Motivation - having an expectation that reading will be enjoyable, interesting, and valuable</p> <p>Engagement - participating in a reading activity</p>	Motivated students more easily engage in the activity
Executive Function Skills	<p>Executive function skills - higher order thinking processes that make it easier to learn or do something</p> <p>Cognitive flexibility - being able to shift between reading processes</p> <p>Attentional control - being able to direct attention to specific parts of the text</p> <p>Working memory - making a mental model while decoding words in the text</p> <p>Inhibitory control - ignoring distractions</p> <p>Planning - setting a goal and managing progress toward the goal</p>	<p>How the mind thinks, shifts, plans, and stays engaged</p> <p>Shifting between decoding a new word and making meaning of the text</p> <p>Rereading an event in the text and thinking about the impact on the character's next decision</p> <p>Holding onto the meaning of the text while reading the text and adding more to it as you read</p> <p>Focusing while reading (despite chatter in the classroom)</p> <p>Plan to read one chapter per day and journal, and implement that plan</p>
Strategy Use	<p>Reading strategies - Thinking processes that can be intentionally controlled that help readers with various aspects of reading.</p>	<p>Decoding strategies: break down multisyllabic words into chunks</p> <p>Vocabulary strategies: use knowledge of morphemes to determine meaning of words</p> <p>Comprehension strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing; making a mental model</p>

KEY INSIGHTS

1

Teaching reading is a complex task involving multiple processes that are intertwined and rely on the reader to engage and think about reading. Components identified in the AVR can be directly taught to students and were selected because research demonstrates providing interventions in these components improves reading comprehension.

2

The constructs of word recognition and language comprehension are not entirely separate processes. Some reading skills are only related to decoding (e.g., phonemic awareness, decoding skills), some skills are only related to language comprehension (e.g., verbal reasoning, content knowledge), while other skills are related to both word recognition and language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, fluency, morphological awareness). These skills help bridge and coordinate decoding and meaning for comprehension.

3

The reader plays an important, active role in learning to read. Executive function and self-regulation skills within reading can be taught, and research has shown these active self-regulation skills impact reading comprehension (Cartwright & Palian, 2024).

4

As research grows and technology evolves, educators should expect models and theories of reading to be updated to reflect current research outcomes. This does not necessarily mean that what we knew before was incorrect, but the education field should continually improve and refine how we teach reading based on high-quality research.

Citation

Duke, N. K., & Cartwright, K. B. (2021). The science of reading progresses: Communicating advances beyond the Simple View of Reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 56(S1), S25-S44. <https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/rrq.411>

MELC Brief Citation

Preston, A. I. & Cartwright, K. B. (2025). *SCORE 1: The active view of reading*. (MELC Brief Series: Translating Research for Literacy Educators). Mebane Early Literacy Center (MELC). <https://education.charlotte.edu/melc-briefs-translating-research-for-literacy-educators/>