

Research Recap: Why the “Early Reading Accelerators”?

Reading science emphasizes two critical pieces in systematic early reading instruction: **securing foundational skills** and **building knowledge and vocabulary**. These “Early Reading Accelerators” are essential content that all students need access to in order to become proficient.



Foundational Skills



The Early Reading Accelerators



Knowledge & Vocabulary

What does research tell us about how proficient reading works?

Reading science has shown us a lot about how the brain learns to read, and we can use these theoretical models to better understand how to provide evidence-based instruction for early readers.

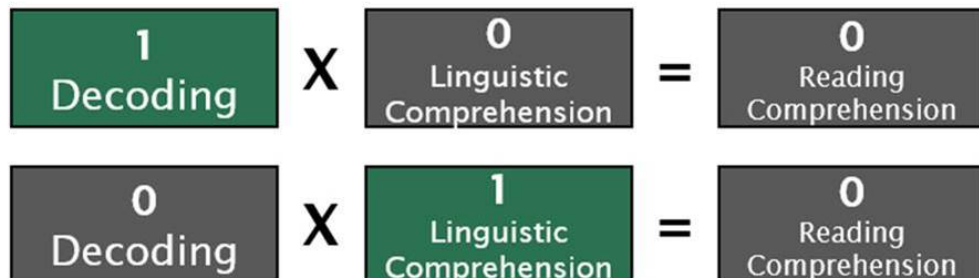
The Simple View of Reading

$$D \times LC = RC$$

D Decoding
(word-level reading)

LC Linguistic Comprehension
(ability to understand spoken language)

RC Reading Comprehension



One important model of how proficient reading works in English is called the **Simple View of Reading**¹...and it really is simple! This model takes what research has shown us about reading comprehension and boils it down into two basic, interdependent components: **decoding** (or the ability to read the words on the page) and **linguistic comprehension** (or the ability to understand spoken language).

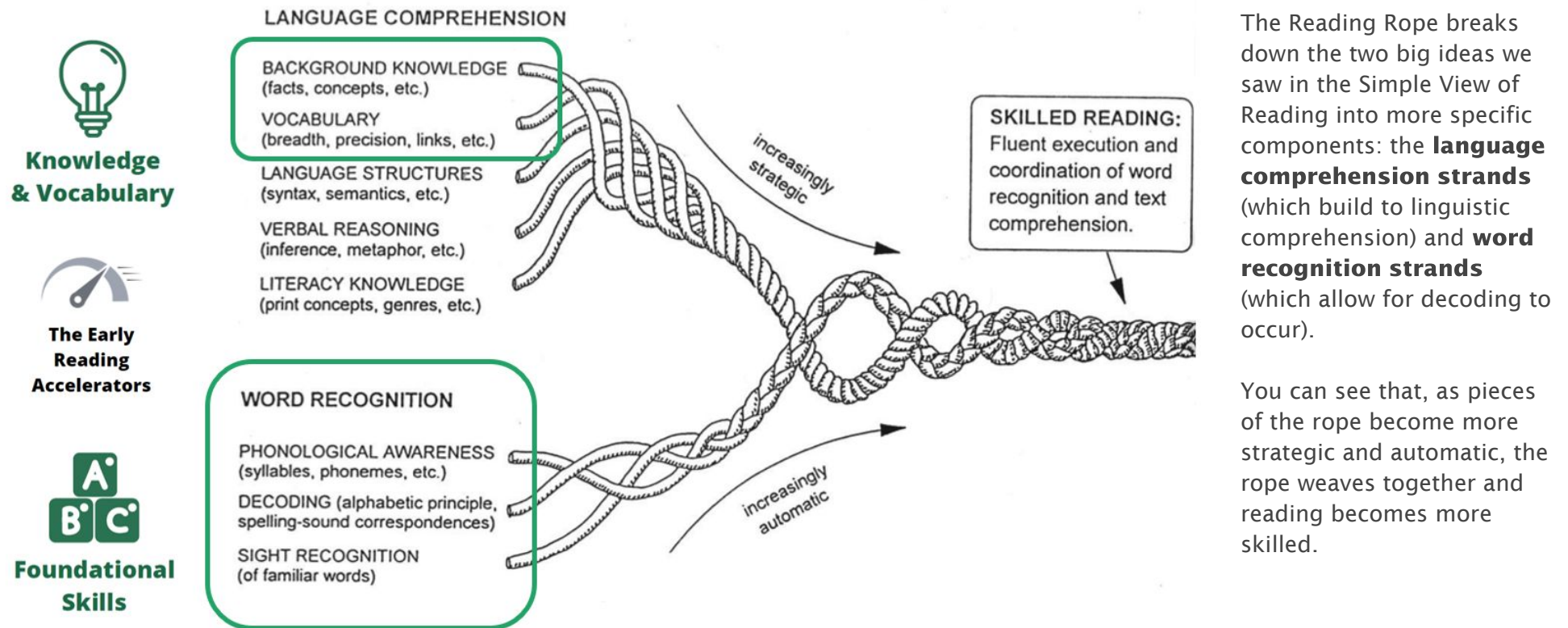
The Simple View of Reading is an equation: reading comprehension is the product of decoding skill and linguistic comprehension, with both skills represented by a number between 0 and 1. If either of these factors is zero, the result is zero reading comprehension.

This model, based on reading science, shows us that neither decoding *nor* understanding of language is enough on its own. We need both for proficient reading.

¹ Gough, P.B. & Tunmer, W.E. (1986). Decoding, reading, and reading disability. *Remedial and Special Education*, 7, 6-10.

While the Simple View of Reading is a helpful way to understand the basics, reading is a *tad bit* more complicated! A slightly more nuanced view of the Simple View of Reading is Scarborough’s Reading Rope.²

Scarborough’s Reading Rope



The Reading Rope breaks down the two big ideas we saw in the Simple View of Reading into more specific components: the **language comprehension strands** (which build to linguistic comprehension) and **word recognition strands** (which allow for decoding to occur).

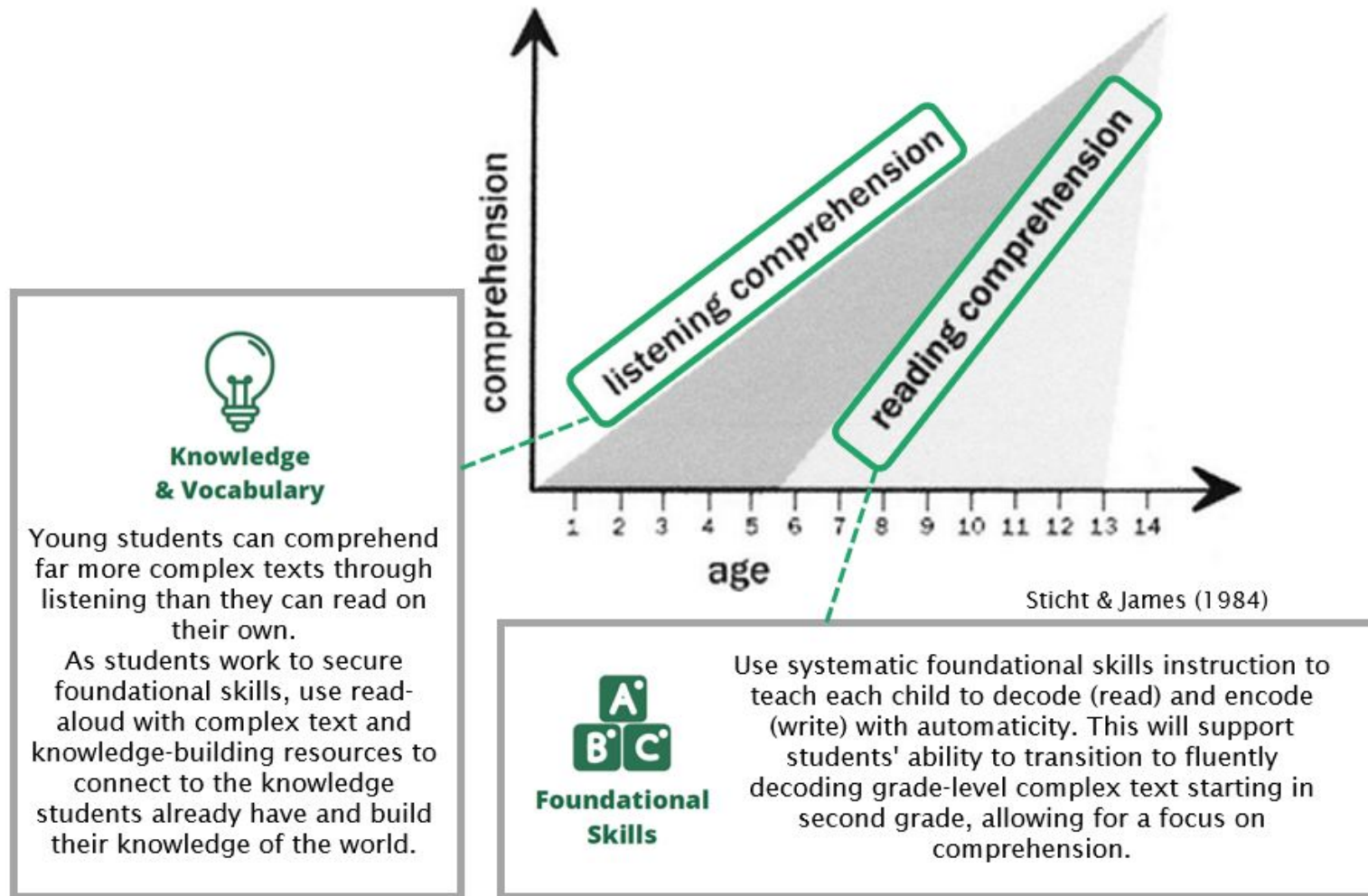
You can see that, as pieces of the rope become more strategic and automatic, the rope weaves together and reading becomes more skilled.

Skilled reading happens when students read known sound and spelling patterns with automaticity, contributing to reading fluency. Without accurate and automatic decoding, too much of the cognitive load is taken up by word recognition, leaving limited resources for language/linguistic comprehension.

But word recognition is not enough! As we saw in the Simple View of Reading, skilled reading *also* requires linguistic/language comprehension, including background knowledge and vocabulary. Without this, a student may decode the words on the page but not have access to meaning.

² Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook for research in early literacy* (pp. 97-110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

How do we attend to supporting *both* **decoding** and **linguistic comprehension** with early readers? One important consideration for young students is how to maximize growth of knowledge and vocabulary, even as students are learning to read. The chart below helps us think about implementing these two early reading accelerators: securing foundational skills and building knowledge & vocabulary.³



Learn more about implementing these [Early Reading Accelerators](#) in your K-2 classroom.

³ Sticht, T. G., & James, J. H. (1984). Listening and reading. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 1) (pp. 293-317). White Plains, NY: Longman.