

The Four Components of Reading

Though various sources count some elements of the components separately, current literature has reached consensus that the components of reading are these:

- **Alphabetic** – which includes phonemic awareness (knowing the sounds and names of letters), words attack skills i.e. decoding – breaking words into sounds or syllables and blending them back together, and sight words.
- **Fluency** – smooth, accurate reading at an appropriate speed with good intonation and rhythm.
- **Vocabulary** – knowledge of the meaning of words.
- **Comprehension** – understanding and remembering what you read. Accurate, fluent reading does not ensure comprehension. Constant monitoring and direct instruction of comprehension strategies are important.

The components are not sequential. All components should be taught at all levels. The ultimate goal of the teaching alphabetic, vocabulary, and fluency is, of course, comprehension, though all components reinforce each other and may develop at the same time. Students will benefit from direct, explicit instruction in each component.

Steps of Direct, Explicit Instruction

The large body of reading research has affirmed that direct, explicit instruction is the most effective method of providing reading instruction to ABE learners. The purpose of this instruction is to scaffold instruction, giving the students ample support; then, gradually to release them to perform the skill independently and apply it in different settings. These steps may occur over the course of several lessons.

Direct, explicit instruction has six, discrete steps.

- I. **Introduction and Explanation of the Lesson** The teacher must activate the students' prior knowledge and help them connect it to the new information. Tell students the purpose of the lesson and what they will be expected to do.
- II. **Modeling – “I Do”** In this phase of direct instruction the teacher explains the concept or idea and models how to perform the task. The teacher may do a “think aloud” to demonstrate his own thinking through of the problem. Students observe.
- III. **Guided Practice – “We Do”** Students begin to practice the skill in a sheltered way– perhaps working in groups. The teacher checks for understanding and gives lots of feedback.
- IV. **Guided Practice – “Y’all Do”** More practice in a familiar setting, but moving toward independence. “Think, Pair, Share” is one technique to give all students more expressive practice. Teacher still monitors understanding closely.
- V. **Independent Practice – “You Do”** At this point students work independently to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the concept in unfamiliar situations.
- VI. **Continual Monitoring** is formative assessment that guides teachers' practice and lets us know when to review, re-teach, or give more guided practice to students.

A Summarizing Strategy

Teach any new strategy using the steps of direct, explicit instruction. All strategies must be taught explicitly for learners to eventually generalize and apply them when faced with a new task. The purpose of teaching students a strategy is to give them tools to become independent, self-regulated learners.

Summarizing strategies have been shown by the research to improve both reading and writing abilities. Active reading comprehension requires self-monitoring and self-regulation, and summarization is a tool to help them acquire it. Given that adult students are often not with us for very long periods of time, we need to make our instruction as valuable and efficient as possible.

The **RAP** summarizing strategy is a short, clear strategy used to teach summarizing skills. Researched with adolescents (Hagaman, Luschen & Reid, 2010; Schumaker, Denton, & Deschler, 1984), this strategy has been shown to support learners in monitoring their reading comprehension.

RAP stands for **Read, Ask, and Paraphrase**.

- *Read* a paragraph or passage.
- *Ask* yourself, “What is the topic?” “What is the most important thing the passage tells me about that topic? (main idea)” “What are the most important details?”
- *Paraphrase*, or **put it in your own words**.

In our Webinar, we will use the **RAP** strategy to demonstrate the steps of direct, explicit instruction.