



Canada's Reading Problem:

Compelling and comprehensive scientific evidence on reading difficulties rarely reaches the classroom.

National Strategy for Early Literacy

Presentation

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Reading Research:
An Important Shift in
Emphasis occurred 30-44
years ago.

Reading is NOT primarily a
visual skill.

Reading is primarily an
auditory linguistic skill.

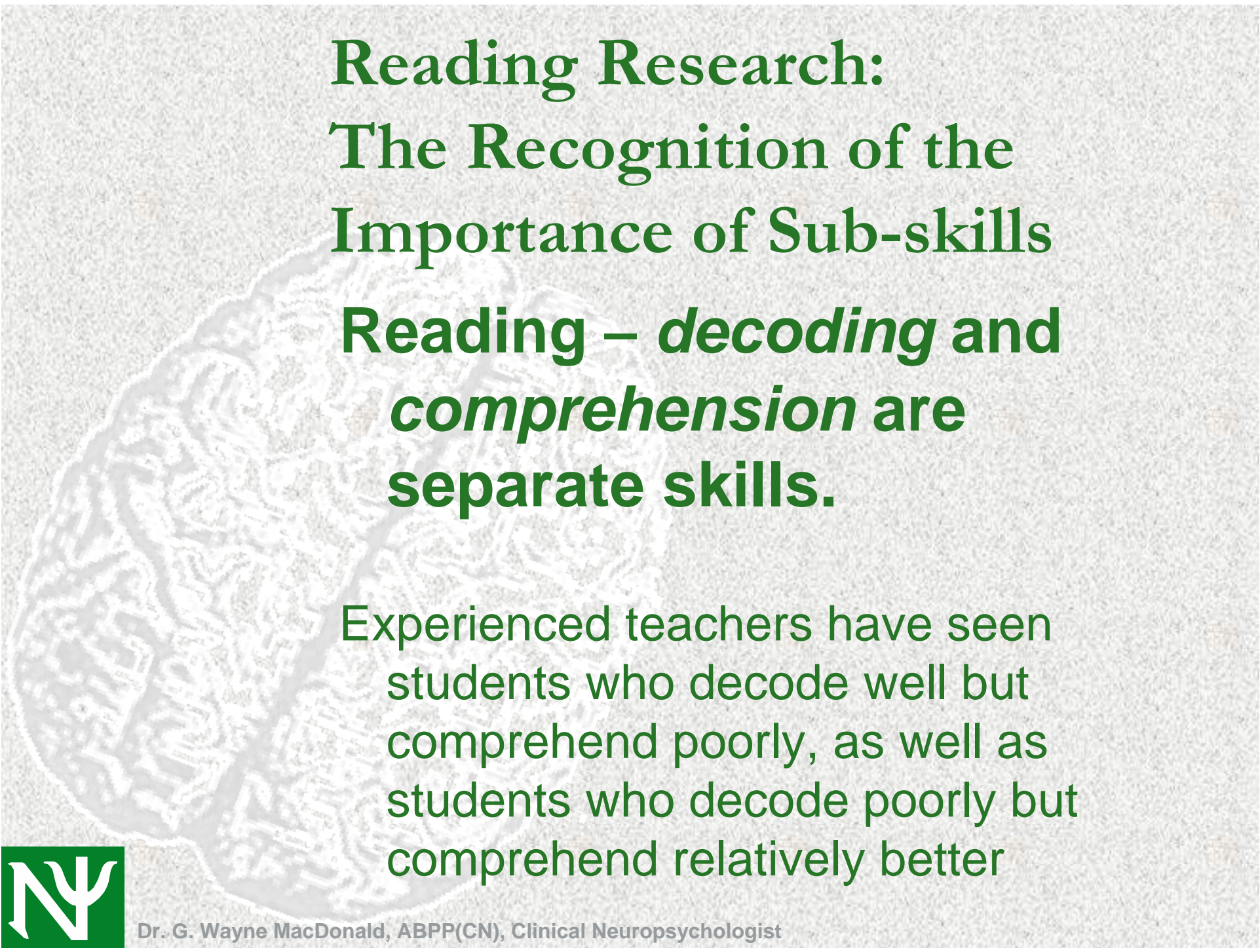
Goodman, 1965

Smith, 1971

Lieberman & Shankweiler, 1973, 1979

Mattis, et al., 1975





Reading Research: The Recognition of the Importance of Sub-skills Reading – *decoding* and *comprehension* are separate skills.

Experienced teachers have seen students who decode well but comprehend poorly, as well as students who decode poorly but comprehend relatively better



Reading Research:

The biggest subgroup of poor readers is composed of those who have reading-decoding problems.

Stanovich, 1986

Students must learn to identify words accurately and rapidly.



Reading Research: What is Phonological Processing?

Phonological processing is the ability to analyze the sound system of a language.

e.g. Say “clap” say it again but don’t say /k/ ... “**lap**”.
(Many people refer to this as a “sounding out” strategy. This skill’s relevance for spelling is clear but most people do not appreciate how important it is for reading.)



Reading Research:
Critical Discovery
20-25 years ago

There is increasing evidence
that the linkage from
phonological processing ability
to reading is a causal one.

Bradley & Bryant, 1985

Liberman & Shankweiler, 1985

Stanovich, 1986, 1988

Wagner & Torgesen, 1987



Reading Research: Longitudinal Predictability

The relationship between
phonological awareness and
reading and spelling
achievement eleven years later.

MacDonald, G.W. & Cornwall, A.C. (1995)
Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28, No. 8, 523-527



Table 3
Partial Correlation Coefficients Between 1982 and 1993
Variables

1993	1982		
	AAT	SES	PPVT
AAT	.47*	.17	-.17
WRAT-R Reading	.49*	-.01	.21
WRAT-R Spelling	.53**	-.01	.21
WRMT-R Word Attack	.39	.15	-.12
WRMT-R Passage Comprehension	.20	.13	.12

Note: N = 24. AAT = Auditory Analysis Test; WRAT-R = Wide Range Achievement Test – Revised; WRMT-R = Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests – Revised; SES = socioeconomic status; PPVT = Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

*p < .05. ** p < .01



Conclusions

Phonemic skills in early elementary school were more predictive of exit high school reading and spelling skills than:

- Reading
- Spelling
- SES
- Vocabulary

Our educational policies and practices continue to ignore these data 14 years later.



Why Are We Not Adopting Evidence Into Practice?

- **The “Reading Wars” are over**
 - Both sides won: Language and the acquisition of automatic, phonological skills are important for reading.
 - We, now, need a National Strategy which will, finally, integrate scientific evidence into the reading instruction that is occurring in our classrooms.
 - **Canadian children deserve no less!**

Thank you



Which list is easier to remember?

5832

9617

4036

1927

8453

3601

STOP

HOME

SHOW

RAIN

MUST

FARM

