

Effective Reading Strategies for Economics at the Secondary and Post-Secondary Level

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Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Basic literature review/research on some of the key concepts covered (along with some content from well-known authors that may not be peer reviewed).

I am going to cover these lightning fast to leave time for the methods/application.

Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Background knowledge: “Four ways that background knowledge is important to reading comprehension:

- 1) It provides vocabulary;
- 2) it allows you to bridge logical gaps that writers leave;
- 3) it allows chunking, which increases room in working memory and thereby makes it easier to tie ideas together;
- 4) it guides the interpretation of ambiguous sentences.”

(Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School*, 28)

Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Scaffolding A teaching technique that provides temporary support to students as they learn new concepts or skills and “enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts.”

(Wood et al, *The Role of Tutoring in Problem Solving*, 90)

Reinforcing concepts: “Whatever you think about, that’s what you remember. *Memory is the residue of thought.*”

(Willingham, 47)

Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Sense, Meaning, and Transfer: “Students learn best when what they learn makes sense, has a logical order, and has some meaning in their lives. It is hard to convince students to learn things they feel are irrelevant to their lives.”

(Tokuhamma-Espinosa, *The New Science of Teaching and Learning*, 116)

Curiosity: “The finding that curiosity enhanced later recall of novel information suggests that curiosity helps to consolidate novel information in memory.”

(Kang et al *The Wick in the Candle of Learning*, 971)

Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Storytelling and Learning: “Stories are narratives with plots and beginnings and endings and even a character or two. Lectures, especially ineffective ones, are often litanies of facts and details...It is just easier to remember information when we have a structure into which we can put these details. Stories provide that for us and our students.”

(Eyler, *How Humans Learn: The Science and Stories Behind Effective College Teaching*, 99-100)

Research backing the reading strategies discussed

Guided discussion: “Discussions are most successful when instructors employ more open-ended questions than close-ended ones...nothing will shut down a discussion faster than too many questions to which there is only one answer...shift instead to “why” questions-questions that really delve into the significance of the issues the class is addressing.”

(Eyler, 46)

Transition from research to methods

Now that you know why you should use the components we are going to address, there is one key question you need to ask before you assign a reading, and really when you are structuring your curriculum:

Why are you assigning this concept/reading?

Slight overlap with literacy targeted (LT) teaching of economics, but not really LT.

SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE

(2001)

LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

THE MANY
STRANDS
WOVEN INTO
SKILLED
READING

INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC

WORD RECOGNITION

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

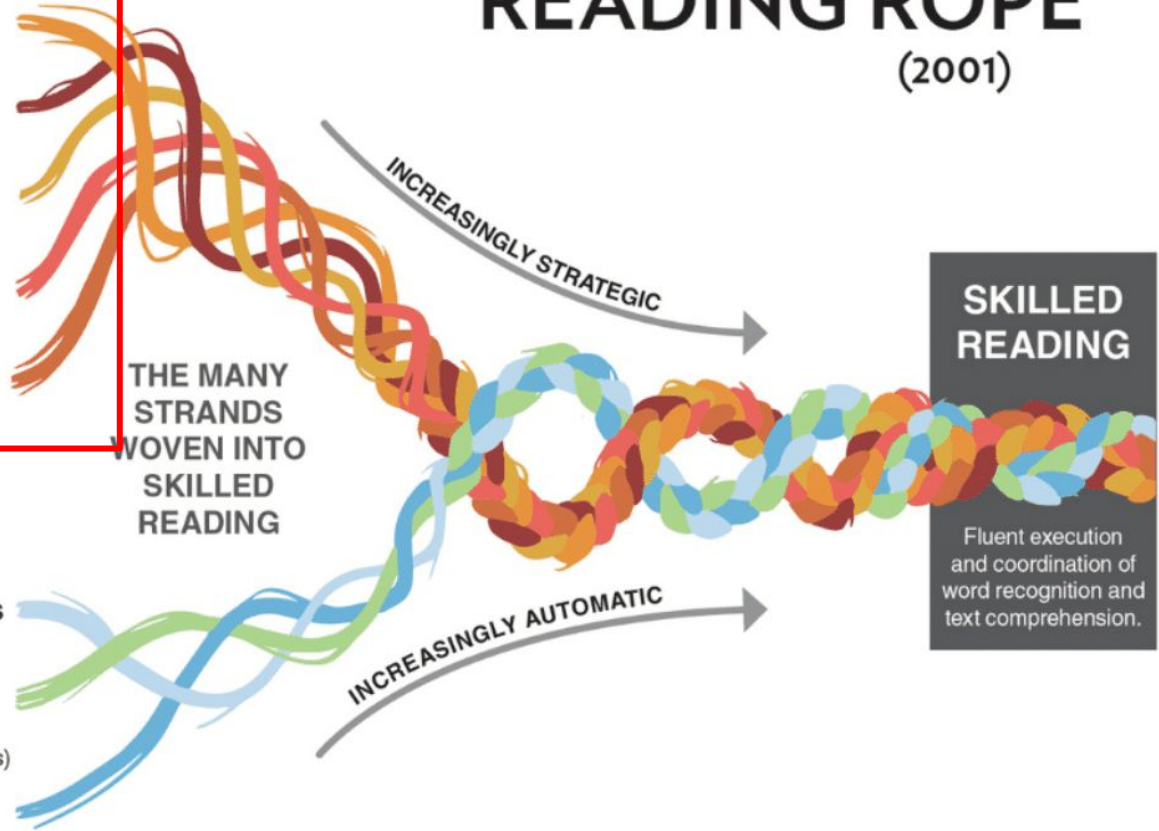
DECODING
(alphabetic principle,
spelling–sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)

INCREASINGLY AUTOMATIC

**SKILLED
READING**

Fluent execution
and coordination of
word recognition and
text comprehension.



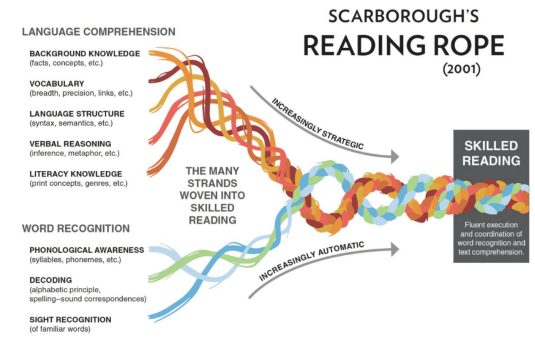
Example: Naked Economics “Incentives Matter”

These are all of the different assignments that I provide to students on this one chapter:

1. Cold read
 2. Vocabulary quiz
 3. Model reading / thinking
 4. Student generated content PRE quiz
 5. Post-quiz
 6. Worksheet “Four Cs”
1. 15 minutes. No expectation that the text will be entirely read. No pressure. Create two columns in the front of the room: (a) concepts / content, (b) vocabulary that might get in the way of understanding
 2. In Canvas, teachers can set up assignments where one must be completed before others open. I do this with the Vocabulary Quiz. Students need to earn an 80% or better on the quiz before the other assignments open.
 3. Find an engaging section of the text and read it aloud. Discuss it. Why did the author include that in the reading? What makes it important? Why was that the example that was used? Are there other examples - maybe even better ones?
 4. Students create questions on post-it notes from the text. Start with multiple choice. Post the questions in the front of the room. Have a student sort them, as there will be repeated questions. Discuss what makes a good question, as well as the answers. (Students who did not earn an 80% on the Vocabulary Quiz will be taking Cornell Notes in the back of the room to catch up.)
 5. Post-quiz is based on the vocabulary quiz, student-generated questions, and questions from the teach, or from past years. (Traditional assessment) Discuss results. Have students write questions / content that was not on the quiz that they thought was important. (Use these for quizzes in the future.)
 6. Groups of four: Complete the Four Cs worksheet and discuss in groups. While collecting these worksheets, engage in a class discussion: Why would some people choose to not complete the Vocabulary Quiz assignment? Was this a good decision on their part?

Background Knowledge

- Taken from the **Cold Read**
- Content / Topics generated by students get reshaped into a table of contents (see right)
- Vocabulary list becomes a **Vocabulary Quiz** (next slide)

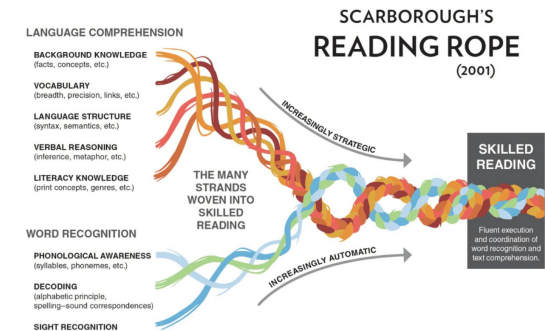


Outline of Chapter 2: Incentives Matter

Page(s)	Topic
30-34	Rhinos
34-35	Economic Systems
39-41	Mergers
44-46	Prisoner's Dilemma
46-48	Creative Destruction
48-49	Competition
49-53	Taxes

Vocabulary

- Taken from the **Cold Read**
- Made into a **Vocabulary Quiz** that must be passed before moving to the next assignment



Definitions, by page number:

(Page 30) **Incentives:** Perceived benefits that encourage certain behaviors.

(<https://www.stlouisfed.org/education/glossary>)

(Page 31) **Utility:** the state of being useful, profitable, or beneficial (Dictionary.com)

(Page 31) **Altruism:** the belief in or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others (Dictionary.com)

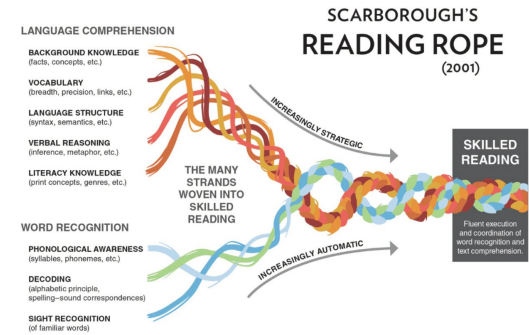
(Page 31) **Free Rider:** someone who would not be willing to pay for a certain good or service but who would get the benefits of it anyway if it were provided as a public good (textbook glossary)

(Page 36) **Adverse Selection:** The tendency of insurance to be purchased by those most likely to make claims. (<https://www.stlouisfed.org/education/glossary>)

Language Structure

(This excerpt is from page 34)

- Read the section aloud
- **Model** what kind of thinking I would be doing as a reader
- Discuss the content
- Students generate questions based on the reading for a **Pre-Quiz**



Incentives matter. When we are paid on commission, we work harder; if the price of gasoline goes up, we drive less; if my three-year-old daughter learns that she will get an Oreo if she cries while I'm talking on the phone, then she will cry while I am talking on the phone. This was one of Adam Smith's insights in *The Wealth of Nations*: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." Bill Gates did not drop out of Harvard to join the Peace Corps; he dropped out to found Microsoft, which made him one of the richest men on the planet and launched the personal computer revolution in the process—making all of us better off, too. Self-interest makes the world go around, a point

Verbal Reasoning

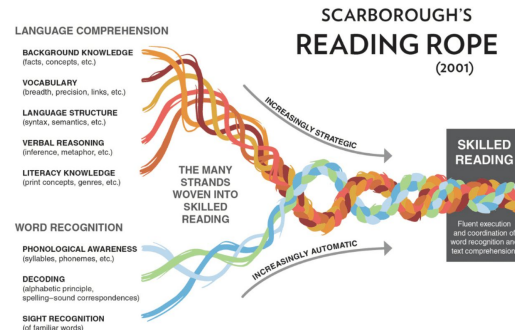
Project Zero (Harvard) product

→ **Four Cs worksheet** / discussion

This is where the students add to the text. Dig deeper than the words on the page. Add examples, meaning, and relevance. This needs to be more than a worksheet - it is a discussion starter.

Wrinkle: I have had students rotate to new groups and share their “C” with new partners. Get more ideas generated, and then come together for a class discussion. My discussion focused on this question:

*“Economics is all about choices, so why would some students choose to not complete the **Vocabulary Quiz** at 80%, as assigned?”*



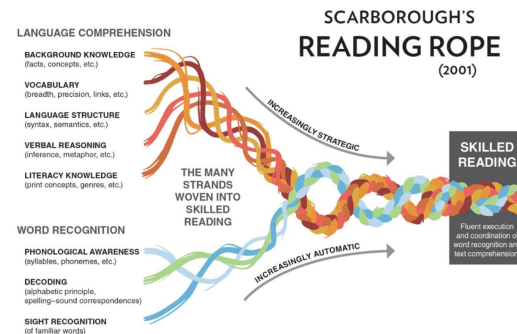
Literacy Knowledge

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/388541/americans-reading-fewer-books-past.aspx>

Interesting ending thoughts in the article (last paragraph): It is unclear from these data if the declines in book readership are occurring because of a lack of interest in books, a lack of time to read books, or perhaps COVID-19-related disruptions in lifestyle activities or access to books. It is also uncertain at this point whether the declines in book reading mark a temporary change or a more permanent one.

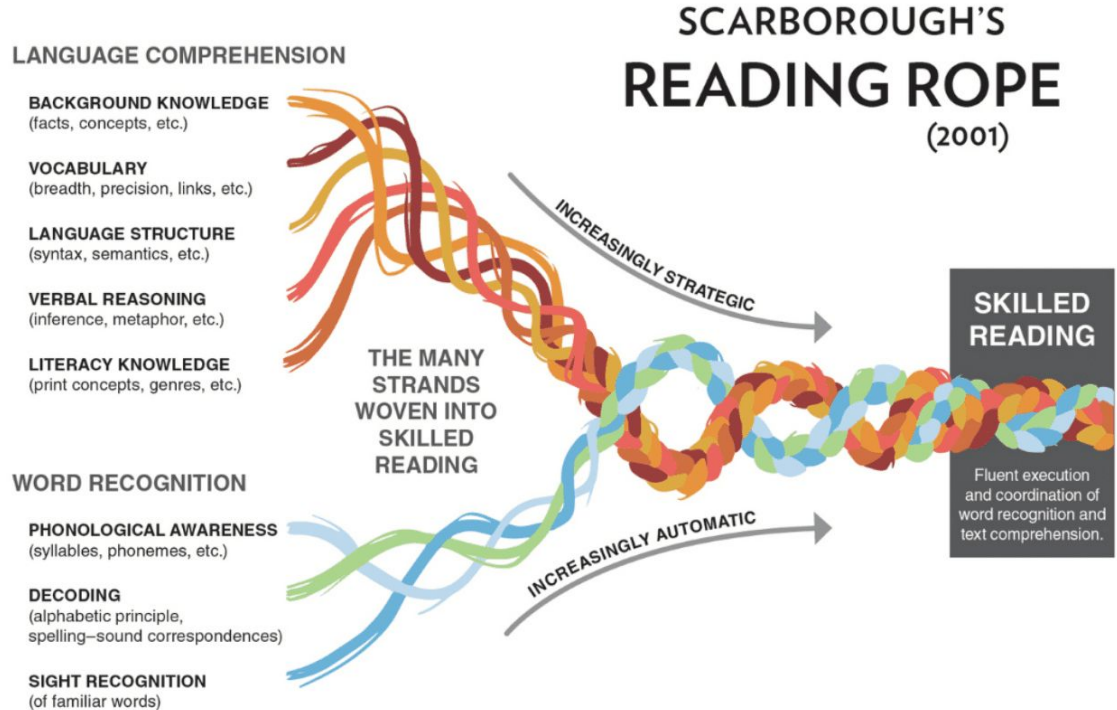
How are we engaging with text?

- **Model** reading / thinking
- **Four Cs worksheet** / discussion
- **Post-quiz**



Using the Reading Rope

1. Cold read
2. Vocabulary quiz
3. Model reading / thinking
4. Student generated content PRE quiz
5. Post-quiz
6. Worksheet “Four Cs”



Thank you for your time!

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions at all.

