

## THE SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

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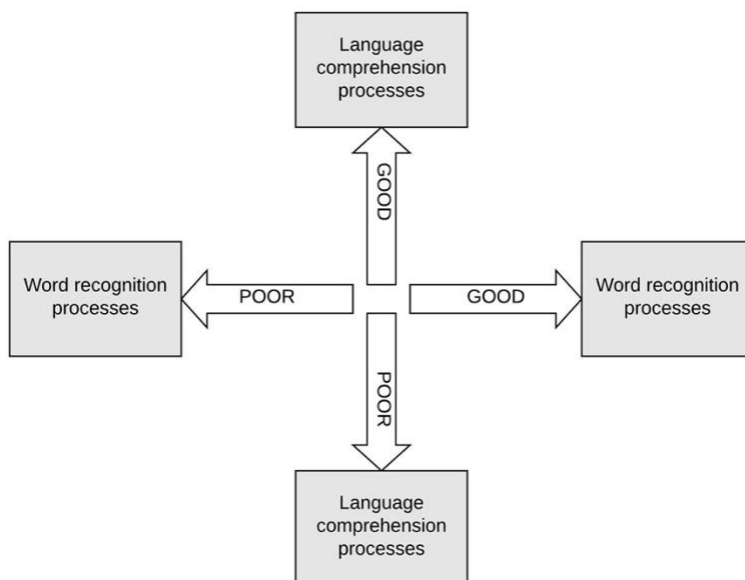
*“Mention the Simple View of Reading to a group of primary school teachers, and you will most likely be met with expressions of curious “tell me more”, but I am yet to encounter teachers who report that they learnt about this model (introduced in the 1980s) in their initial teacher education. If The Simple View of Reading not the intellectual property of teachers, for heaven's sake, whose intellectual property is it?”*

*Pamela Snow 2019*

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Though Cognitive Load Theory is said to be the single most important concept for teachers to know, the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer 1986) is a *critical* concept for any adult involved in teaching reading.

The Simple View of Reading is a logical, testable formula grounded in decades of research.



The Simple View of Reading

The SVR states that skill level in reading comprehension can be predicted by measuring two processes:

1. word recognition **multiplied by**
2. language comprehension.

So, the better you can convert the letters on the page into sounds and words, and the more words you understand, the more you'll be able to comprehend what you're reading.

This works the other way too. If you cannot identify words on a page, you will struggle to comprehend what you are reading. Your reading comprehension is directly affected by your word level reading ability.

Let's take some simple examples using two separate tests:

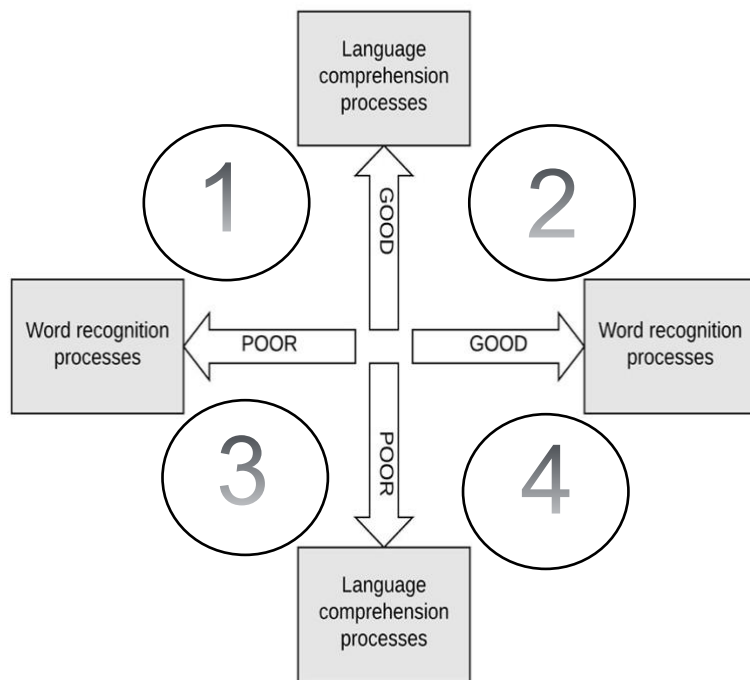
1. A listening comprehension test
2. A single-word reading test

Four students in Grade 3 are tested. Each test has a possible high score of 1, the standard score expected at that grade level. Here are their scores:

	Listening comprehension	Word reading	Reading comprehension
Agnes	0.5	0.75	0.375
Bethany	0.75	0.5	0.375
Calvin	1	1	1
David	0.5	0.5	0.25

Notice how the reading comprehension scores for Agnes and Bethany are the same, yet their profiles are remarkably different. You would not be able to differentiate these students with a simple 'read aloud and answer questions' test, nor would you be able to recommend appropriate intervention.

Here are their stories:

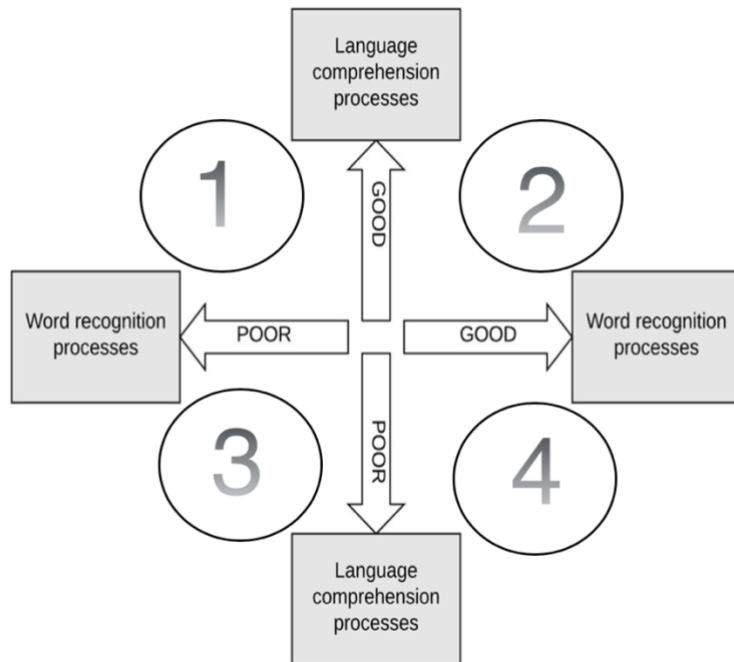


Agnes is in year three and has memorised a vast amount of whole words. On her reading test, she scored reasonably highly as a result. Her linguistic comprehension is lower. She has a limited vocabulary and background knowledge. Her reading comprehension score is 0.375.

**Scoring task:** Write Agnes's name in the quadrant she best fits into.

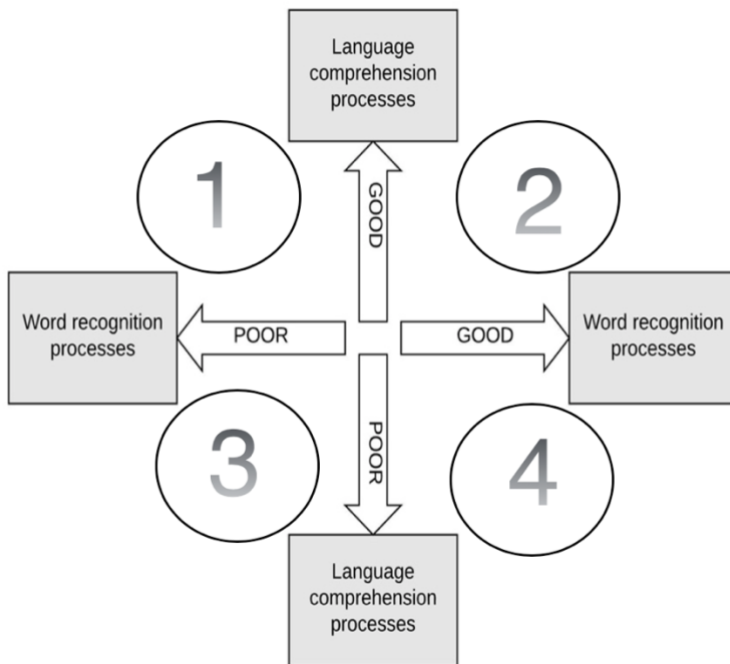
Bethany has lots of trouble storing and remembering words. She has a large oral vocabulary though and is very knowledgeable, although she isn't learning anything new from reading, so when she is tested she gets the same scores Agnes: 0.375.

Does this mean their interventions should be the same, or do they need a different focus from one another?



**Scoring task:** Write Bethany's name in the quadrant she best fits into.

Calvin's scores showed that his decoding and linguistic comprehension are at the standard expected from a child his age. His score is one that means he is very likely to be able to understand what he reads and his linguistic comprehension and his reading proficiency are likely to increase overtime without intervention .

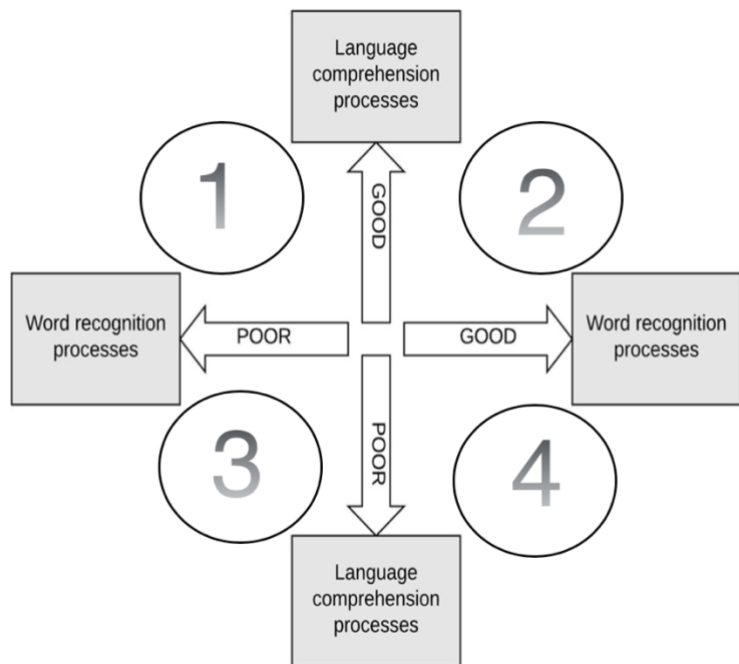


Calvin's scores showed that his decoding and linguistic comprehension are at the standard expected from a child his age. His score is one that means he is very likely to be able to understand what he reads and his linguistic comprehension and his reading proficiency are likely to increase overtime without intervention .

**Scoring task:** Write Calvin's name in the quadrant he best fits into.

David bottomed out on both measures. He is the one in most need of the highest quality intervention and his response to intervention may be slower than Agnes's or Bethany's.

**Scoring task:** Write David's name in the quadrant he best fits into.



## THE SIMPLE VIEW OF WRITING

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*“Teach to each of the multiple levels of language within each of the four language systems (by ear, mouth, eye, and hand). Each language system has multiple units at which language can be analyzed, learned, and used: subword, word, and multi-word syntax, and text.”*

*Virginia Berninger (2020), from a presentation entitled Thoughts on Simple and Not So Simple Views of Writing*

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Just as in the Simple View of Reading, the Simple View of Writing states that there are two critical, separate aspects of fluent writing. They are:

### TRANSCRIPTION

and

### IDEATION

Transcription definition

“The process and physical acts of representing sounds to written symbols, including spelling and handwriting skills”

(McCutchen, 2000)

Transcription skills:

- Handwriting/keyboarding
- Mechanics
- Spelling

Ideation definition:

“The generation and organization of ideas”

(Juel et al. 1986)

Ideation skills:

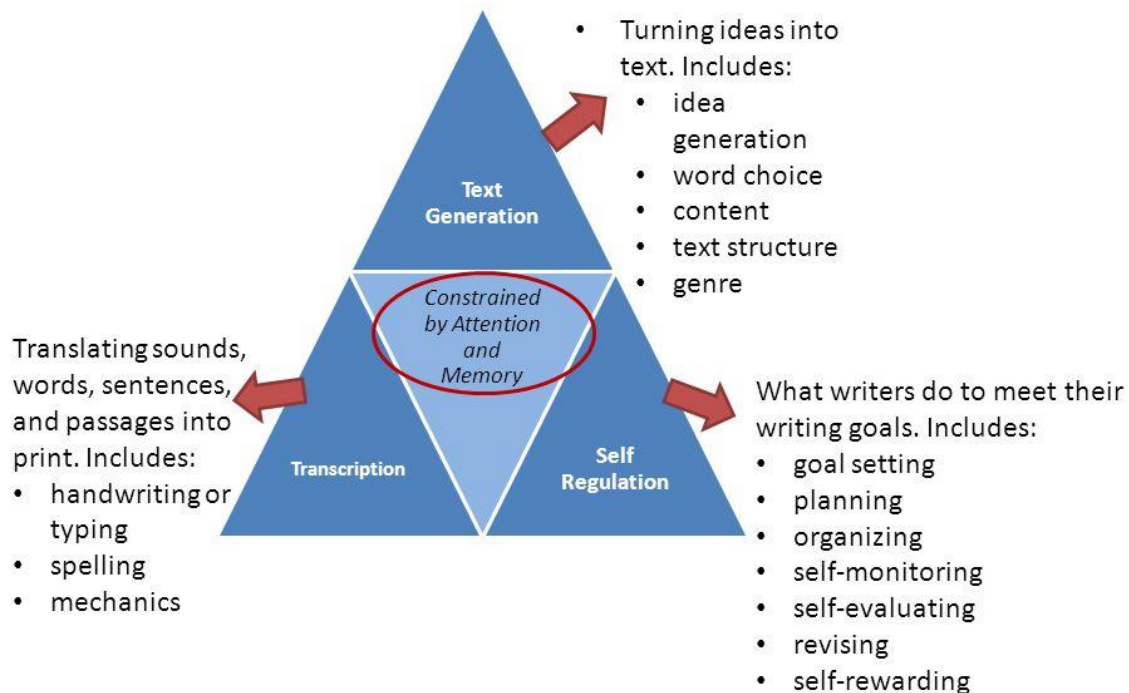
- Idea generation
- Word choice
- Content
- Text structure
- Genre

To this model, Berninger and Amtmann have added attention, memory and self-regulation.

The following diagram illustrates:

## Simple View of Writing

(Berninger & Amtmann, 2003)



If we were to break writing down into its separate components, the two critical aspects can be placed on a model much like Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001), where one side ideally becomes increasingly automatic (transcription) and the other becomes increasingly strategic (ideation).

