



education review // reseñas educativas

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

March 3, 2011

ISSN 1094-5296

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>

Follow Education Review on Facebook



Farrell, Mary L. & Matthews, Francie M. (2010). *Ready to Read: A Multisensory Approach to Language-Based Comprehension and Instruction*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Pp. 108 ISBN 978-1-59857-051-9

Reviewed by Shannon S. Moon
Mills College

The tension between phonics instruction and whole language has polarized reading instruction in recent years. As the pendulum has swung back and forth, higher level reading skill instruction has been lost in the static. Farrell and Matthews (2010) contend that higher level reading comprehension skills are not fully appreciated by educators and parents, as the majority of reading instruction and ready remediation focuses on basic skills such as word recognition and fluency. They identify four key skills of which teachers need to be aware and teach explicitly to both mainstream students and students with reading disabilities: vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and reading comprehension. In *Ready to Read*, Farrell and

Citation: Moon, Shannon S. (2011 March 3) Review of *Ready to Read* by Farrell, Mary L. & Matthews, Francie M. *Education Review*, 14. Retrieved [Date] from <http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1053.pdf>

Matthews highlight teaching methodologies for these skills in mainstream classrooms as well as for mainstreamed students with reading disabilities; specifically, they explore how mainstreamed students with reading disabilities can be supported via three representative, longitudinal case studies which follow students from fifth grade through high school.

As *Ready to Read* is intended to be a one-stop reference for teaching higher level reading skills, Farrell and Matthews devote the first chapter to a brief explanation of language acquisition. Specifically, they provide information delineating basic reading skills and higher level reading skills as well as how oral language acquisition impacts both of these sets of skills. Educators will appreciate this brief review of the terminology and the language acquisition process. This chapter also reviews the various reading disabilities and how they impact reading comprehension with specific attention paid to dyslexia, specific language impairment, and language learning disabilities. While these terms are likely familiar to special education teachers, providing this review is essential for mainstream and subject level teachers who likely only received a broad review of these disabilities and their attributes in their credential programs and/or professional trainings.

Subsequent chapters address each of the four higher level reading comprehension skills in this order: Vocabulary, Morphology, Syntax and Sentence Comprehension, and Listening and Reading Comprehension. Each chapter provides a brief explanation of the skill and its importance in terms of reading comprehension; these explanations are grounded in the literature and provide a clear link between oral language acquisition of the skill and reading comprehension. After this brief overview, each chapter provides research based higher level reading skill teaching methodologies for mainstream classrooms. This information is used to enrich and extend common practices; Farrell and Matthews provide specific suggestions and brief outlines for each methodology as well as suggested references. The meat of each chapter, however, is how teaching methodologies are used to support students with reading disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Using each of the three representative cases,

Farrell and Matthews identify specific approaches used in each case and explain how these approaches are appropriate for supporting similar students.

In terms of mainstream classrooms, educators will find the specific methodology suggestions for teaching each of these four higher level reading skills to be easily accessible. Farrell and Matthew provide lists of specific approaches for some of the methodologies. For example, for semantic mapping (p. 21), they provide a specific example of its use in the mainstream classroom. Other methodologies, such as reciprocal teaching (pp. 52-53), are beyond the scope of the book; in these cases, Farrell and Matthew provide a brief overview and references for further resources.

As the focus of *Ready to Read* is students with reading disabilities, the information Farrell and Matthew provide for differentiating the curriculum for each of the four higher level reading skills is more specific. Each of the three representative case studies is preceded by a general overview of interventions and differentiation which mainstream educators can build into their curriculum for their students with reading disabilities; these resources are clear, specific, and relatively easy to integrate. Each case study represents one of three common reading disabilities: dyslexia, specific language impairment, and language learning disability. For each, Farrell and Matthew outline the specific interventions and support methodologies provided for each of these students and the relevant outcomes. These explanations are grounded delineating the student's specific strengths and weaknesses and how their oral and reading language acquisition play into the specific higher level reading skills. The suggested interventions and scaffolds provide an easy to read road map for educators who want to ensure that students with these reading disabilities are adequately supported in their classrooms. Most of the interventions and scaffolds suggested by Farrell and Matthew are extensively supported by teacher's aids, even at the middle and high school level. Educators may therefore find that providing these specific supports might be challenging without the support of a teacher's aid, in which case they should attend to the specific interventions explained before the representative case studies.

Ready to Read provides an important reference for educators who are committed to supporting their struggling readers. Whether those readers are identified as having a reading disability or are identified by an individual teacher as a struggling reader, educators will find the strategies and ideas provided in this book to be a valuable addition to their teaching practice.

About the Reviewer

Shannon S. Moon is a doctoral candidate at Mills College as well as a high school English and AVID teacher. Shannon's research interests include curriculum, lesson planning, pedagogy, and English education.

Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*.

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>



Editors

Gene V Glass

glass@edrev.info

Gustavo Fischman

fischman@edrev.info

Melissa Cast-Brede

cast-brede@edrev.info
