COMMON TYPES OF READING PROBLEMS AND HOW TO HELP CHILDREN WHO HAVE THEM

Louise Spear-Swerling

Three patterns of reading difficulties are common. This article explains how recognizing these three patterns can provide a valuable starting point for planning reading instruction and interventions.

Recently I visited the classroom of a third-grade teacher, Ms. Jackson (all names are pseudonyms). Like many teachers, Ms. Jackson had a diverse group of students, which included many children who were English learners or who had limited home experiences with academic language and literacy. Several children with disabilities also were included in her classroom, three with learning disabilities and one with high-functioning autism. Ms. Jackson had great enthusiasm and dedication for teaching her students, but she was concerned about the number of children who entered her class with problems in reading, commenting quietly to me at one point, “So many of them are needy, but in different ways.”

Individual children do vary in important ways, including in their specific interests, personalities, and prior learning experiences. However, when it comes to reading problems, three common patterns of difficulties tend to recur repeatedly, and most struggling readers in Ms. Jackson’s class probably fit one of these patterns. Recognizing the underlying pattern of poor reading is particularly helpful to providing effective intervention and differentiation of classroom instruction. This article reviews research on common patterns of reading difficulties and explains how understanding those patterns is useful both to classroom teachers and literacy specialists.

What Are the Three Types of Reading Problems?

As displayed in Figure 1, the three common patterns (often termed profiles) of poor reading involve specific...
build on continuing scientific studies as well as earlier research such as that of Valencia and Buly (2004), who outlined six types of reading difficulties, which are consolidated in these three common patterns.

Children with SWRD have problems related specifically to reading words, not to core comprehension areas such as vocabulary or background knowledge. Those with SRCD have the opposite pattern: poor reading comprehension despite at least average word-reading skills. And those with MRD have a combination of weaknesses in word-reading skills and core comprehension areas. Knowledge of these patterns is useful for helping students with many kinds of reading problems—not only those involving certain disabilities (Aaron, Joshi, Gooden, & Bentum, 2008; Nation, Clarke, Wright, & Williams, 2006) but also more experientially based reading difficulties, such as those sometimes found among English learners or children from low-socioeconomic-status backgrounds (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2008; Kieffer, 2010; Lesaux & Kieffer, 2010).

Many studies have shown that children with difficulties in word reading benefit from explicit, systematic phonics interventions, whereas children with comprehension difficulties benefit from explicit teaching and modeling of text comprehension strategies as well as from interventions that promote vocabulary and oral language development (Aaron et al., 2008; Clarke, Snowling, Truelove, & Hulme, 2010; Ehri, 2004; Snowling & Hulme, 2012). Aaron, Joshi, Gooden, and Bentum (2008) studied the performance of elementary-age struggling readers who received differentially targeted interventions, depending on whether they had weaknesses specific to word recognition (systematic phonemic awareness and phonics intervention) or comprehension (intervention in comprehension strategies such as questioning and summarization). Relative to comparison children who received undifferentiated intervention in resource rooms, the intervention groups made significantly more progress in their weak area of reading.

Differentiating classroom instruction according to different patterns also may improve children’s reading outcomes. For example, Juel and Minden-Cupp (1999-2000) observed four experienced grade 1 teachers at two schools serving primarily low-income students throughout a school year. At the end of the year, overall reading achievement was lowest in the classroom of the teacher who provided the least differentiation of instruction.

In addition, however, children who entered first grade with the lowest phonics skills did best in reading with the teacher who provided the most emphasis on explicit, systematic phonics for the first half of the school year, with more emphasis on vocabulary and discussion of text later in the year. Conversely, children who began grade 1 with strong basic reading skills did very well in reading with a teacher who provided relatively little direct phonics teaching but emphasized discussion of text from trade books and meaning-oriented writing activities from the start; presumably, these children had less need for systematic phonics teaching because they already possessed these skills. This study suggests that
differentiating classroom reading instruction according to individual children's word recognition needs and comprehension needs can be beneficial.

**Determining Patterns of Reading Difficulties**

The three types of difficulties mentioned in the preceding section involve underlying patterns of strengths and weaknesses in specific language and reading abilities, sometimes termed components of reading (Aaron et al., 2008; Hoover & Gough, 1990). Important components of reading include phonemic awareness, word decoding, fluent text reading, vocabulary, and listening comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). The first step in determining a struggling reader’s pattern involves assessment of these abilities that underlie reading development.

**Begin by Assessing Key Components of Reading**

Table 1 shows the most important components of reading to consider in a diagnostic assessment of elementary-age struggling readers, with examples of possible measures to use and suggestions for interpreting them or for additional measures that may be warranted. Various measures may be used to assess each area, as long as the assessments are technically adequate (e.g., reliable and valid) and as long as they provide benchmarks, grade levels, or norm-referenced scores to determine whether children perform appropriately for their grade or age. Children who are poor comprehenders (i.e., those with SRCD or MRD) usually benefit from more in-depth assessment of specific areas of comprehension—for example, consideration of not only their vocabulary but also their performance on different types of comprehension questions such as those involving inferencing, knowledge of text structure, or background knowledge. More in-depth assessment of all component areas, including standardized testing, is warranted in certain situations, such as when children are failing to progress in interventions or a disability is suspected.

**An Example: Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin**

Ms. Jackson wanted to determine how best to help three struggling readers in her class—Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin—who all had low scores on reading comprehension assessments at the beginning of grade 3. Ms. Jackson had fall universal screening data for these students, which used curriculum-based measures (CBMs) involving oral reading fluency and which provided information about all three children's accuracy and rate of text reading. She also had collected informal reading inventory (IRI) data for the children, which showed their performance on graded word lists, in reading graded passages, and in answering comprehension questions.

This existing assessment data provided some useful information about components of reading involving out-of-context word reading, accuracy and fluency of passage reading, and reading comprehension. Ms. Jackson also considered the children's prosody of oral reading on the IRI passages—that is, whether they read with appropriate phrasing and expression. Prosody is an important aspect of fluency because poor fluency may be based in vocabulary and language limitations as well as

<table>
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<th>Component</th>
<th>Examples of Useful Assessments</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
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| Out-of-context word decoding (and spelling) | IRI graded lists  
CBMs involving nonsense words  
Informal spelling inventories | Include at least one assessment containing nonsense words.  
If nonsense word decoding is weak, assess PA.  
Spelling inventories may be useful for screening groups. |
| Oral text reading accuracy          | IRI graded passages: child's accuracy of word reading in context | Consider whether the child applies known decoding skills when reading passages or over-relied on context. |
| Oral text reading fluency           | IRI graded passages: child's rate of reading in context  
CBMs involving oral passage reading fluency  
Prosody rating scales | Consider whether fluency problems involve 1) poor decoding, 2) weak vocabulary/listening comprehension, or 3) both areas. |
| Oral vocabulary                     | Informal classroom assessments of child’s oral vocabulary knowledge | Consider whether weak vocabulary accounts for weak listening/reading comprehension. |
| Listening comprehension (sentences/passages) | IRI graded passages: child’s listening comprehension for passages read aloud by the teacher | Follow up with multiple measures or more in-depth assessment if needed. |
| Reading comprehension               | Answering comprehension questions about passages read  
Maze CBMs | Follow up with multiple measures or more in-depth assessment if needed. |
“Assessing important components of reading does not require administering an exhaustive battery of tests to every struggling reader.”

In decoding (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel, & Meisinger, 2010; Valencia et al., 2010), children might read the words in a passage with ease but still read with halting prosody because they do not understand the meaning of the text. Timed measures of oral passage reading are useful for assessing reading accuracy and rate, whereas rating scales may be more useful for assessing prosody (see, e.g., Benjamin et al., 2013; Zutell & Rasinski, 1991).

In addition to readily available assessment data, Ms. Jackson also needed further information about the children’s specific decoding skills, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. She knew that some use of nonsense words is important in assessing decoding because nonsense words provide information about whether children can decode unfamiliar words, whereas they may recognize real words from memory (Siegel, 1999). When she administered this kind of decoding assessment to Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin, only Calvin did well; Ayisha and Ben both had decoding problems, mainly in relation to two-syllable words. Ms. Jackson also knew that poor decoders’ phonemic awareness (PA)—such as children’s ability to perform oral phoneme blending or segmentation tasks—should be considered. However, neither Ayisha nor Ben had difficulties with blending or segmenting phonemes.

Finally, Ms. Jackson recognized that vocabulary knowledge is particularly central to both listening and reading comprehension (Pearson, Hiebert, & Kamil, 2007) and that vocabulary assessments of struggling readers should be oral. If vocabulary assessments require reading, children with decoding weaknesses may perform poorly simply because they cannot read the words. When Ms. Jackson probed Ayisha’s oral vocabulary knowledge seemed excellent; Ayisha also consistently performed well in listening comprehension tasks (e.g., during teacher read-alouds).

However, Ben clearly had vocabulary weaknesses, and both he and Calvin sometimes had comprehension difficulties even during teacher read-alouds—that is, they appeared to have weaknesses in listening comprehension. Unlike Ben, Calvin had good vocabulary knowledge; his comprehension difficulties were more often tied to problems in recognizing key points of a text, understanding text structure, and summarization. Table 2 displays each child’s performance on important components of reading.

As Ms. Jackson’s experience shows, assessing important components of reading does not require administering an exhaustive battery of tests to every struggling reader. Classroom teachers often have some student data available from commonly collected formative assessments and district-wide universal screening and progress monitoring. They also have observational data based on their students’ everyday classroom performance. When more extensive assessment is necessary for a particular child—for instance, if a child’s difficulties seem especially serious or difficult to interpret—classroom teachers can consult support staff such as reading specialists, special educators, or Title I teachers. These specialists may be able to help classroom teachers by providing information about available assessments for their students.

Table 2  Performance of Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin on Component Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Ayisha (SWRD)</th>
<th>Ben (MRD)</th>
<th>Calvin (SRCD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-context word decoding (and spelling)</td>
<td>Often inaccurate in grade-appropriate passages</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral text reading accuracy</td>
<td>Rate below grade expectations; prosody often poor because of difficulties decoding</td>
<td>Often inaccurate in grade-appropriate passages</td>
<td>Grade-appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral text reading fluency</td>
<td>Rate below grade expectations</td>
<td>Grade-appropriate or better</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral vocabulary</td>
<td>Grade-appropriate or better</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening comprehension (sentences/passages)</td>
<td>Grade-appropriate or better</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
<td>Grade-appropriate</td>
<td>Below grade expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
or by administering assessments. For children with disabilities, detailed assessment data about important components of reading and language may already be available in the child’s individualized education plan (IEP).

**Interpret Assessment Measures to Determine the Pattern of Reading Difficulty**

Once teachers have information about the specific component abilities of individual struggling readers, they can interpret these data to determine the type of reading difficulties each student has. Teachers should look for patterns of specific strengths and weaknesses in important component reading and language skills. They also should consider the dynamic underlying children’s problems in reading fluency as well as reading comprehension (Spear-Swerling, 2013, 2015), because each pattern may (or may not) be accompanied by difficulties in reading fluency. Moreover, slow reading may sometimes be an adaptive strategy, as when a child intentionally reads slowly better to comprehend a difficult text (e.g., Valencia & Buly, 2004). Table 3 displays the typical patterns for poor readers with SWRD, SRCD, and MRD.

Despite their difficulties with word decoding, children with SWRD usually do well in situations in which information is presented verbally. These students may shine during teacher read-alouds and class discussions, able to answer sophisticated comprehension questions accurately and thoughtfully, especially when text content has been presented orally. Although some children with SWRD may have considerable knowledge of sight words, the hallmark of this pattern involves difficulty decoding unfamiliar words using phonics knowledge. These children also may have difficulties with reading fluency due to inaccurate or labored decoding, and they nearly always have poor spelling.

**Table 3 Common Patterns of Reading Problems**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Intervention Needs</th>
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| Specific word reading difficulties (SWRD) | - Decoding (and sometimes PA) below average  
- Spelling below average  
- Oral vocabulary and listening comprehension at least average  
- Fluency often below average due to decoding problems  
- Reading comprehension often below average due to decoding problems | - Good ability to learn orally (e.g., through class discussions and teacher read-alouds)  
- Reading comprehension strong when children read texts they can decode | - Explicit, systematic phonics intervention  
- PA and fluency intervention if needed  
- Ample opportunities to apply decoding skills in oral text reading, with teacher feedback |
| Specific reading comprehension difficulties (SRCD) | - Decoding at least average  
- Reading comprehension below average  
- Oral vocabulary and listening comprehension may be weak  
- Fluency may be weak due to language limitations (not poor decoding) | - Good foundational reading skills  
- Spelling often strong | - Explicit, systematic intervention targeting specific comprehension weaknesses (e.g., vocabulary, inferencing)  
- Include oral vocabulary and language in intervention |
| Mixed reading difficulties (MRD) | - Decoding below average  
- Reading comprehension below average, even in texts children can decode  
- Reading fluency often weak due to limitations in both decoding and language | - Individual children usually have strengths in specific areas of language or reading (e.g., their knowledge base about specific interests) | - Combination of intervention needs for first two patterns  
- Multicomponent interventions may be especially useful |

SWRD can grasp challenging vocabulary and comprehension standards as well as typical readers, particularly in an oral context or with accommodations for their difficulties in reading grade-level text, but will need help meeting foundational standards from the Common Core.

Children with SRCD struggle with reading comprehension despite having at least average decoding skills. Often, their comprehension difficulties are tied to mild weaknesses in vocabulary or broad language comprehension, although generally these difficulties are not severe enough to make them eligible for speech-language services (Nation,
Poor comprehenders may have weaknesses in many specific areas, including use of comprehension strategies, text structure, and background knowledge. (Neuman & Celano, 2006; Rand Reading Study Group, 2002).

Reading fluency may be poor because of language comprehension weaknesses—that is, a child may read slowly because he or she does not understand the text.

Children with SRCD are likely to meet foundational standards from the Common Core as well as typical readers but may have difficulties with many comprehension-related standards, such as those involving vocabulary, summarization, author’s craft, or citing evidence from texts. Although they can decode grade-appropriate texts, they may need considerable teacher scaffolding in order to comprehend them (see, e.g., Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012).

Children with MRD have a combination of the problems seen in the first two patterns: weaknesses in decoding and phonological skills, but also in core comprehension areas such as vocabulary or listening comprehension. (This is why Figure 1 shows this pattern in an overlapping area between SWRD and SRCD.) Unlike readers with SWRD, those with MRD have difficulties in reading comprehension even when reading texts they can decode well, because of their core comprehension weaknesses. Reading fluency may be poor due to a combination of decoding problems and language limitations. These students often have difficulty meeting both foundational and comprehension-related standards from the Common Core.

Although students with MRD have more generalized reading problems than those with SWRD or SRCD, these students typically do have individual areas of strength, which teachers can capitalize upon in intervention. For example, a student with a combination of decoding and general vocabulary weaknesses may have a strong interest in a specific topic, such as animals or sports, about which he or she has considerable background knowledge and motivation to read.

Ms. Jackson looked at the information from the assessments of component abilities for Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin, and she also reflected on the dynamics underlying each child’s reading problems. Ayisha’s reading comprehension and reading fluency difficulties obviously were tied entirely to decoding. Her vocabulary was excellent; her comprehension was consistently strong during teacher read-alouds or when she was reading text she could decode; and her slow rate of reading and poor prosody clearly stemmed from labored decoding. Ayisha’s pattern of poor reading involved SWRD.

Calvin had the opposite pattern: good decoding and text reading accuracy, as well as grade-appropriate fluency (both in terms of rate and prosody), but weaknesses in reading comprehension and language comprehension. His difficulties in summarization and lack of knowledge about text structure were apparent whether he was reading or listening, an indicator of a core comprehension weakness. His pattern involved SRCD.

Like Ayisha, Ben had problems in decoding, but unlike Ayisha, his difficulties in reading comprehension were not always tied to faulty decoding; they also appeared linked to vocabulary weaknesses. Furthermore, his reading fluency problems likely related to both areas, labored decoding and language comprehension difficulties. Ben’s pattern of poor reading involved MRD.

Effective Instruction and Interventions for Each Pattern

Clearly, interventions for Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin need to differ in some important ways. The far-right column of Table 3 shows the intervention needs associated with each type of reading difficulty.

Children with SWRD, such as Ayisha, typically require highly explicit, systematic phonics intervention. Ayisha did not have problems in phonemic awareness, but for children with these weaknesses, PA intervention should be integrated with phonics instruction (Ehri, 2004); children can learn PA skills such as phoneme blending and segmentation in the context of decoding and spelling words from specific phonics categories. More advanced students with SWRD like

“Children with SWRD, such as Ayisha, typically require highly explicit, systematic phonics intervention.”
Ayisha—those learning to decode two-syllable or multisyllabic words—often benefit from learning syllabication strategies and structural analysis. Struggling decoders also must apply their developing decoding skills in oral reading of text that provides a reasonable match to their word-reading skills, with teacher guidance and feedback (Cheatham & Allor, 2012; Vadasz, Sanders, & Peyton, 2005).

Children with SRCD, like Calvin, need interventions focused on the specific comprehension areas in which they are weak. Because knowledge of text structure and the ability to summarize texts were areas of difficulty for Calvin, Ms. Jackson modeled for him how to identify key points in texts and construct a summary. She also used graphic organizers to teach him about text structure. Ms. Jackson taught these skills in the context of oral activities, such as during read-alouds and classroom discussions, as well as in the context of Calvin’s own reading. Many comprehension abilities can be developed through listening as well as reading, and including oral language development as part of the intervention may be particularly useful for children with SRCD (Clarke et al., 2010).

Children with MRD, like Ben, need phonics interventions and opportunities to apply decoding skills in reading text, coupled with explicit teaching targeting their specific comprehension weaknesses. Ben’s difficulties in comprehension tended to involve vocabulary. For children with limitations in this area, direct teaching of target academic words and strategies for inferring word meanings from context, as well as morphological instruction focused on the meanings of root words and affixes, is often effective (Goodwin & Ahn, 2013). Vocabulary development should occur through oral activities such as teacher read-alouds as well as through students’ reading. Multicomponent interventions that address multiple components of reading in an integrated way (e.g., Gelzheiser, Scanlon, Vellutino, Hallgren-Flynn, & Schatschneider, 2011) also may be especially valuable for students with MRD.

For all types of reading difficulties, the suggestions for intervention in Table 3 should be implemented as part of a more comprehensive program of English language arts instruction, with strong collaboration between classroom teachers and interventionists to ensure an effective program. For example, children with SWRD, like Ayisha, need instruction in vocabulary, language, and comprehension; however, they do not need intervention in these areas and can usually receive their vocabulary and comprehension development as part of the core general education program, as long as any necessary adaptations of instruction are made (e.g., oral presentation of grade-level material that children cannot read themselves). Likewise, children with SRCD, like Calvin, need to learn the foundational decoding and spelling skills that are part of the expectations for their grade, but they do not need intervention in these areas.

Of course, most classroom teachers have very limited time for implementing interventions with struggling readers. However, information about common types of reading difficulties can still be helpful to general educators in differentiating classroom instruction. A primary-grade teacher like Ms. Jackson could differentiate instruction through small flexible groups, with one group to meet the most frequent needs of third graders with SWRD (e.g., additional explicit phonics instruction focused on syllabication and decoding of two-syllable and multisyllabic words) and another to meet the most frequent needs of those with SRCD (e.g., additional instruction in vocabulary and background knowledge). Children with MRD might participate in both groups. This approach is unlikely to meet the needs of all struggling readers in a class, but it could still benefit many students.

Indeed, this is what Ms. Jackson did for Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin. Ayisha and Ben made very good progress with this approach. Calvin made some progress, but he ultimately needed more intensive intervention through a reading specialist, to which he responded well.

Additional Information About the Patterns

Early- and Late-Emerging Reading Problems

Each pattern of reading difficulties may emerge relatively early or relatively later in schooling, with early-emerging problems generally defined as reading difficulties evident by grade 3 and late-emerging problems as those first manifesting in grade 4 or later (Leach et al., 2003). Ayisha, Ben, and Calvin’s problems,
apparent at the beginning of grade 3, would all be considered early-emerging.

Early-emerging reading difficulties often involve problems in decoding—that is, either an SWRD or MRD pattern (Leach et al., 2003)—because learning to decode is central to children’s early reading development (Ehri, 2004). Still, some decoding problems do not manifest in the earliest grades, and frequently these weaknesses involve decoding of complex or multisyllabic words rather than one-syllable words (Catts et al., 2012; Lipka et al., 2006). A child might have mild weaknesses in phonological skills that do not greatly affect her decoding of simple words but that become more problematic as she advances into grades 4 or 5 and encounters harder words.

As Calvin’s example shows, reading problems involving SRCD can appear in the earliest grades. More often, however, these problems are late-emerging (Catts et al., 2012; Leach et al., 2003), related to escalating demands for reading comprehension in grades 4 and up. A student with mild weaknesses in vocabulary or background knowledge might progress normally in reading comprehension at first but have more difficulties as the expectations for comprehension increase across grades. These students do often have early language weaknesses, but the language weaknesses may not actually affect reading until the middle or upper elementary grades.

Research on late-emerging reading problems suggests that screening and intervention for both broad language weaknesses and phonological weaknesses may help prevent future reading difficulties (Scarborough, 2005). Also, these studies indicate that even the best primary-grade screening and intervention efforts cannot be expected to prevent all reading problems, so providing opportunities for reading intervention beyond the primary grades is essential.

Prevalence of Different Patterns in Specific Groups of Children

The prevalence of different types of reading difficulties depends not only on grade level but also on the school population. For instance, many studies suggest that children from certain demographic groups, such as English learners and those from low-income families, may tend to have weaknesses in vocabulary, academic language, and academic background knowledge (August & Shanahan, 2006; Barone & Xu, 2008; Neuman & Celano, 2006). Teachers at schools serving these populations, such as Ms. Jackson, can expect to encounter relatively greater numbers of children with MRD or SRCD as opposed to SWRD. Some children will experience decoding problems, but because they may often have vocabulary weaknesses too, they may tend to demonstrate a pattern of MRD rather than SWRD. If schools serving these populations provide a strong emphasis on vocabulary and academic language from the earliest grades, this may help to prevent many children’s reading difficulties.

Certain patterns also tend to be associated with some disabilities. Children with high-functioning autism often have a pattern of SRCD, with poor reading comprehension despite average or even better-than-average word decoding skills and with comprehension difficulties connected to the specific cognitive-linguistic weaknesses associated with autism. Conversely, children with dyslexia typically display a pattern of SWRD (Huemer & Mann, 2010) usually associated with phonological weaknesses. Although assessment of individual poor readers’ component abilities always is important, teachers’ awareness of the patterns commonly associated with these disabilities can provide an initial basis for planning instruction and accommodations.

As the preceding discussion suggests, individual children’s experiences (including instructional experiences), as well as their intrinsic
abilities, can influence their patterns of reading difficulties. Children can have vocabulary weaknesses because of language disabilities or simply because they were not exposed to the vocabulary words; they can have decoding problems because of a learning disability such as dyslexia or because of inadequate phonics instruction. However, knowledge about causation is not necessary for information about the child’s pattern of reading difficulty to be valuable in instruction; children with decoding or vocabulary weaknesses need intervention in those areas regardless of the ultimate cause of the weaknesses.

Points to Remember
Information about individual poor readers’ patterns of reading difficulties provides an extremely helpful starting point for teachers of reading. Children with SRCD aren’t likely to profit from phonics intervention, whereas those with SWRD and MRD generally are. Successful phonics intervention should enable struggling readers with SWRD to attain grade-appropriate reading comprehension, whereas those with MRD also will require a comprehension component in their interventions. A fluency intervention that emphasizes speed and automaticity of word decoding may help children with SWRD and MRD, but it is unlikely to help a disfluent reader with SRCD, who may benefit much more from interventions focused on vocabulary and comprehension development.

Children with different patterns of reading difficulty also tend to benefit from different technology supports (Erickson, 2013) and to display different kinds of strengths that can be tapped in the classroom. And they require different types of progress-monitoring measures to gauge their progress during intervention—a measure sensitive to decoding growth for SWRD, one sensitive to growth in vocabulary and/or comprehension for SRCD, and both types of measures for MRD. Information about common patterns of reading difficulties may be only a starting point, but it is a valuable foundation for differentiating instruction and planning effective interventions in reading.

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