



Newsletter from the Secretary of Elementary Education

## *Monthly Messenger – March 2023*

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Dear Catholic School Educators,

During this Lenten Season, Pope Francis' message reflects on the Transfiguration of Jesus. He stated that "In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need." With this in mind, we are reminded this Franciscan Mission Service Reflection ...

# A Litany for Lent

We fast from judging others,  
but feast on patience.  
We fast from apparent differences,  
but feast on unity of all life.  
We fast from words that pollute,  
but feast on words that affirm.  
We fast from complaining,  
but feast on appreciation.  
We fast from bitterness and anger,  
but feast on forgiveness and mercy.  
We fast from discouragement,  
but feast on hope.  
We fast from suspicion,  
but feast on trust.  
We fast from idle gossip,  
but feast on purposeful silence.  
We fast from problems that overwhelm,  
but feast on prayer that strengthens.

May the God of mercy and compassion through the merits of Jesus be with us all during this season of Lent.

*Submitted by: Bernadette Dougherty*

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## Upcoming Events

- Mar 3-10 - Terra Nova Testing
- Mar 10 - End of Second Trimester
- Mar 13 - Third Trimester Begins
- Mar 14 - Phila South & Delaware District Mtgs.
- Mar 15 - Phila North & Montgomery District Mtgs.
- Mar 16 - Bucks & Chester District Mtgs.
- Mar 21 - Early Childhood District Mtg.
- Mar 23 - Universal 7th Grade High School Visitation Day
- Mar 25 - Catechetical Convocation - Archbishop Carroll HS
- Mar 31 - New Principal PLC
- Apr 3 - Universal Principal Mtg.
- Apr 6 - Holy Thursday

- Apr 7 - Good Friday
- Apr 10 - Easter Monday
- Apr 11-14 - NCEA
- Apr 25-27 - STREAM Expo



## Coming Events - April

### STREAM EXPO - Inquiring Minds Want to Know ...

STREAM education has been an important initiative in all of our schools at all levels in the past several years. We have been asked by so many parents and supporting foundations what our students are doing in this area.

The STREAM EXPO is an opportunity for your school to showcase all of the good you are doing in this area to parents, the media and invited guests (foundations, supporting organizations and those supporting us with grants). We encourage **all schools** to participate by having a display of your students' accomplishments.

The registration deadline is **March 31**. You can find more information and register at: <https://forms.gle/bXpStnebp4DjuD8K7>. Display information and location details will be sent to the email on the registration form at the beginning of April.

## Coming Events - May

### First Annual Reading Olympics

Showcase your school's reading skills!

We are looking forward to the participation of so many schools that signed up for the Reading Olympics on May 10. Each county will have its own location.



Book lists were distributed earlier in the school year and the committee is busy preparing the questions for the event. Details will be sent to all participating schools as soon as they are ready. If you have any questions about the Reading Olympics, you can contact Dawn Parker at [dparker@ourladymtcarmelschool.org](mailto:dparker@ourladymtcarmelschool.org).

We are grateful to all who volunteered their time to organize and prepare for this event.





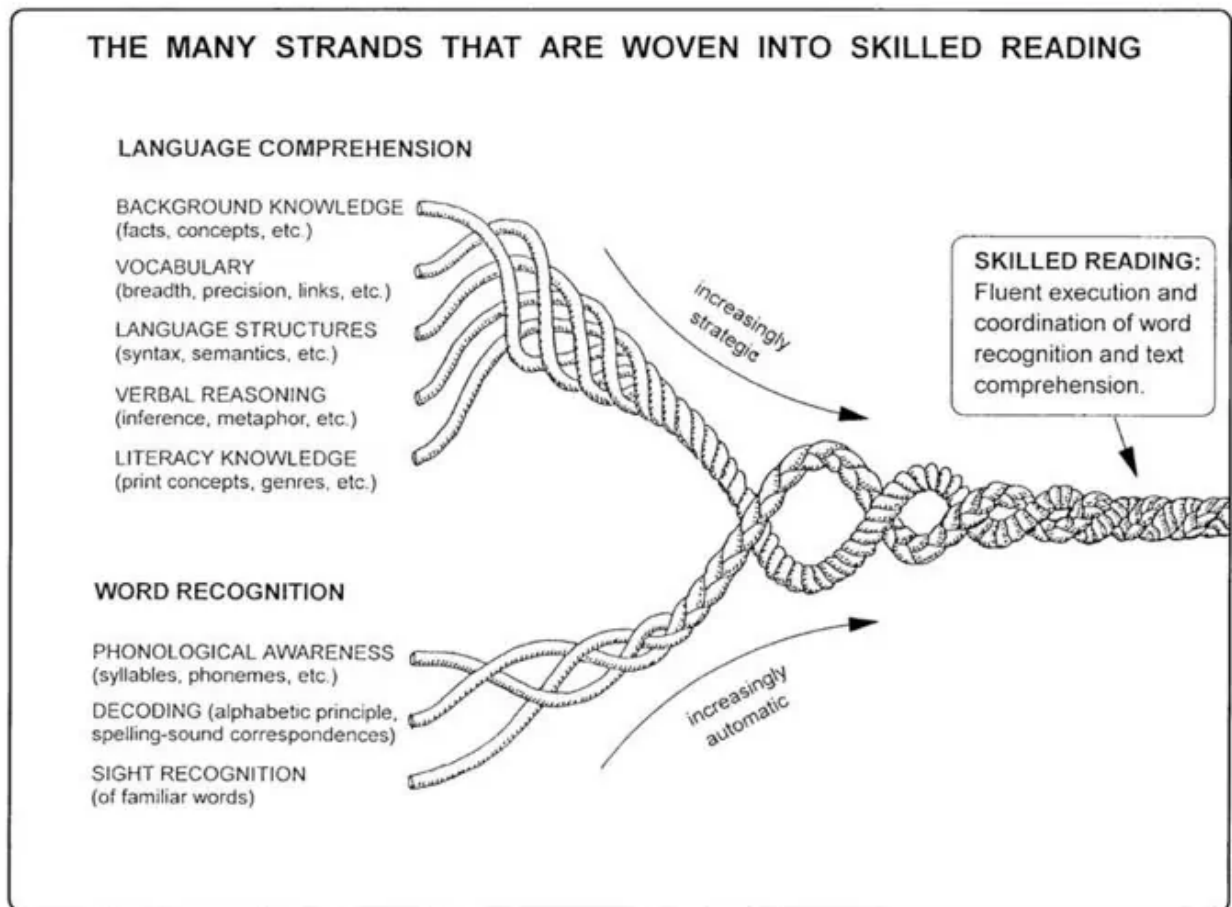
SAVE THE DATE - AUGUST 14

## Summer Early Childhood Workshop

The focus of this summer's Early Childhood Workshop, **August 14**, will be *The Science of Reading*. Because of the importance of this topic, we will be inviting first and second grade teachers to attend as well as the Early Childhood teachers. More details will follow.

CREDIT: Sr. Edward Quinn, IHM

# The Science of Reading



**Literacy as a fundamental human right that empowers individuals in a society.**

Although the scientific evidence base for effective reading has existed for decades, the term “the science of reading” has gained traction in the last few years, potentially leading to misunderstandings.

The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based\* research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties.

## **How do you Teach Reading?**

### **... According to the Science of Reading**

Instead of looking at valid evidence, [many teachers rely on experience](#) and anecdotal information to guide their reading lessons. Although experience is important, depending on experience alone will leave many children behind. To be able to provide reading instruction that helps all children succeed, teachers need a basic understanding of the science of reading.

#### **Explicit Instruction**

Learning to read does not come naturally and requires a complex set of skills that must be taught to students explicitly. The term “*Explicit Instruction*” means that the teacher is the one who takes center stage. The teacher controls the student’s learning by teaching the student. All concepts are directly and explicitly taught to students with continuous student-teacher interaction, guidance, and feedback.

The Science of Reading shows us that explicit or direct instruction is the most effective teaching approach for students with reading difficulties. (Arden & Vaughn, 2016; Simmons, et.al, 2008; Weiser & Mathes, 2011)

In explicit instruction, the teacher will first present a lesson with a demonstration. The teacher will then do the lesson together with the student. Finally, the teacher will ask the student to do it without guidance.

***I do, we do, you do.***

#### **Phonological Awareness**

Phonological awareness means that a child can recognize the sounds, rhythm, and rhyme involving spoken words.

*You hear it and you speak it.*

There is no print involved in phonological awareness. Phonological awareness happens way before children are introduced to letters of the alphabet.

[Research](#) has proven that phonological awareness is highly related to success in reading and spelling.

Phonological awareness involves teaching children rhyming, syllable division, and phonemic awareness.

#### **Systematic Phonics Instruction**

Systematic phonics is the [method](#) of teaching students how to connect the graphemes (letters) with the phonemes (sounds) using a clear and well thought out scope and sequence. This includes:

- Consonant and short vowel sounds
- Digraphs and blends
- Long vowels and other vowel patterns
- Syllable patterns
- Affixes

## Structured Literacy

In the [structured literacy](#) approach, students are taught phonics, decoding, and spelling skills explicitly in a systematic, sequential and cumulative step-by-step process. Structured literacy approaches are effective at helping students with learning differences, such as dyslexia, learn to read and spell (Spear-Swerling, 2019).

Structured literacy instruction is carefully built around a scope and sequence. This scope and sequence dictates the order in which each concept or skill is taught. Each lesson builds upon itself and the student never has to read or spell anything they haven't been introduced to yet, which is why the stories and text in structured literacy are always decodable. The students only read and spell what they have been explicitly taught.

Each individual skill is taught in isolation beginning with the most basic levels of phonics and developing into the most advanced spelling rules and morphological concepts.

## Science of Reading Resources

### Books and Articles

Barshay, Jill. (2020). Four things you need to know about the new reading wars. *The Hechinger Report*.

<https://hechingerreport.org/four-things-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-reading-wars/>

Early Reading Instruction: What Science Really Tells Us about How to Teach Reading (The MIT Press, 2004)

<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/early-reading-instruction>

Hanford, Emily. (2018). At a loss for words: How a flawed idea is teaching millions of kids to be poor readers. *APM Reports*.

<https://www.apmreports.org/story/2019/08/22/whats-wrong-how-schools-teach-reading>

Seidenberg, M. (2017). [Language at the Speed of Sight: How We Read, Why So Many Can't, and What Can Be Done About It](#). New York, N.Y: Basic Books.

Maryanne Wolf, [Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain](#). Harper Perennial, 2008.

### Websites

[Reading Rockets](#)

[National Center on Improving Literacy](#)

[International Dyslexia Association](#)

[The Reading League](#)

(Source: <https://pridereadingprogram.com/the-science-of-reading-what-all-teachers-should-know/>)

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