

What Adolescent Learners Need for Good Reading Comprehension That Is Often Ignored

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# Webinar Tips



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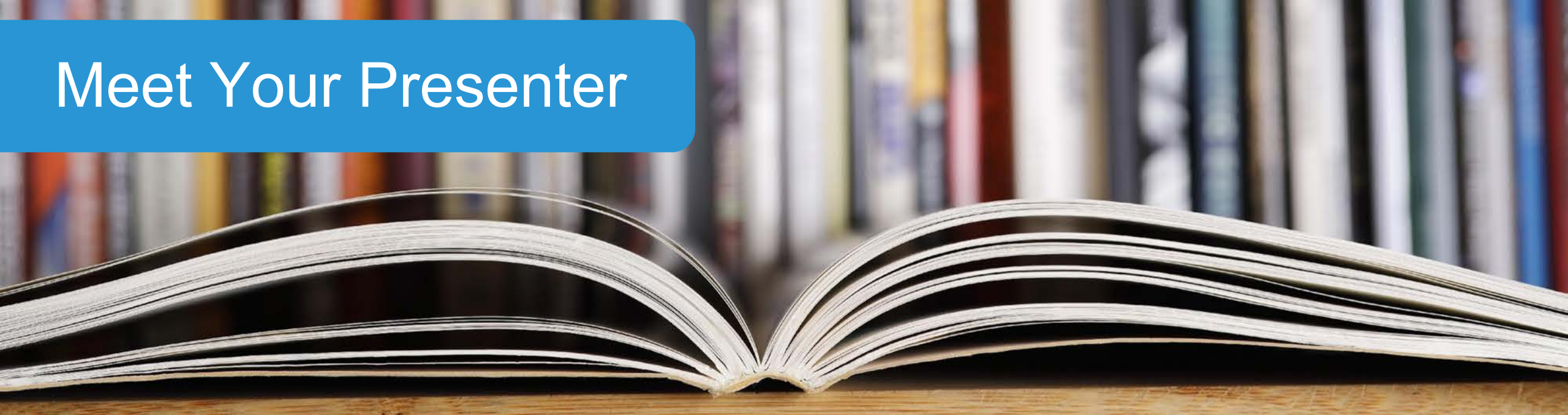


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# Meet Your Presenter



## **Dr. Claude Goldenberg**

*Nomellini & Olivier Professor of  
Education, emeritus  
Stanford University*

# What You Will Learn

- Why reading fluency matters for adolescent readers
- Why reading fluency might particularly matter for English learners
- The four key components of reading fluency
- Strategies to help both English learners and non-English learners experiencing reading difficulties due to a lack of reading fluency

# Recap....

Key points for English Learners' beginning and early reading instruction:

- Teach the “Reading Pillars” explicitly: phonemic awareness, letter-sounds, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
- Make the content and the instructions comprehensible (strategic use of L1 is OK!)
- Provide English language development instruction and opportunities that **directly supports the reading instruction**
- Questions:
  - What is necessary support?
  - What is sufficient?

After beginning and early reading—at intermediate and advanced reading stages from middle elementary to high school—

- English learners face additional challenges.
- Language demands become exponentially more difficult.
- Literacy becomes increasingly dependent on higher levels of English proficiency.
- Background knowledge and knowledge of the world become increasingly important.

# What's needed for reading comprehension as reading development proceeds?

- Knowledge of the target language's
  - Vocabulary
  - Syntax
  - Genre conventions
  - Other conventions, regionalisms, etc.
- General knowledge
- Domain knowledge



But the **foundations** still matter!


WHY?

Read this sentence:


Natural resources can determine a country's economic output and productivity.



What if you  
had to read it  
like this?



Natural resources can  
determine a country's  
economic output and  
productivity.




resources can  
determine a country's  
economic output and  
productivity.

Natural



Natural

resources

A clear glass bottle is shown lying on its side, tilted upwards. The bottle is empty and has a textured surface. Inside the bottle, the text "determine a country's economic output and productivity." is written in a black, sans-serif font, following the curve of the bottle's body.

determine a country's  
economic output and  
productivity.

Natural resources can

Natural

resources

can

determine

A clear glass bottle is shown vertically, with the text "a country's economic output and productivity." written inside it in a black, sans-serif font. The bottle is empty and has a slightly tapered neck.

a country's economic  
output and productivity.

Natural resources can determine a country's



Natural

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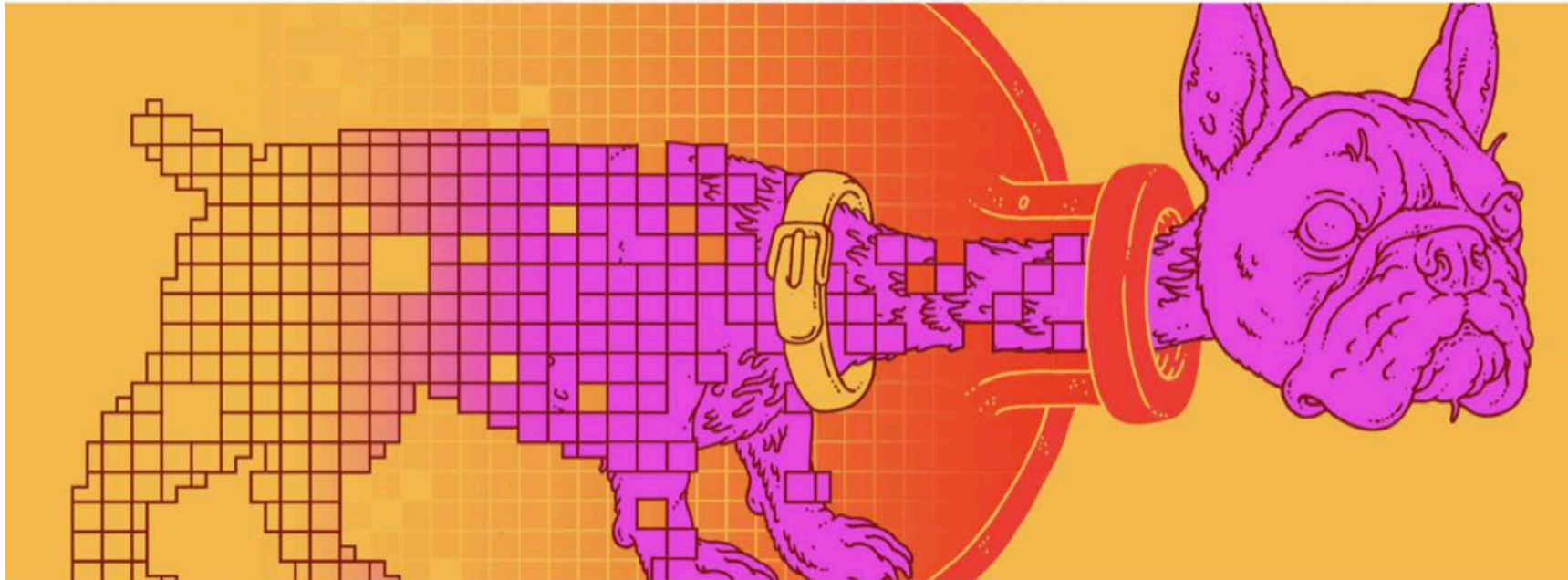


productivity.

Natural resources can determine a country's economic output and productivity.



# BOTTLENECK!



Even if you have adequate oral proficiency, vocabulary, content and world knowledge, etc.

## *What's missing?*

The foundational reading skills of

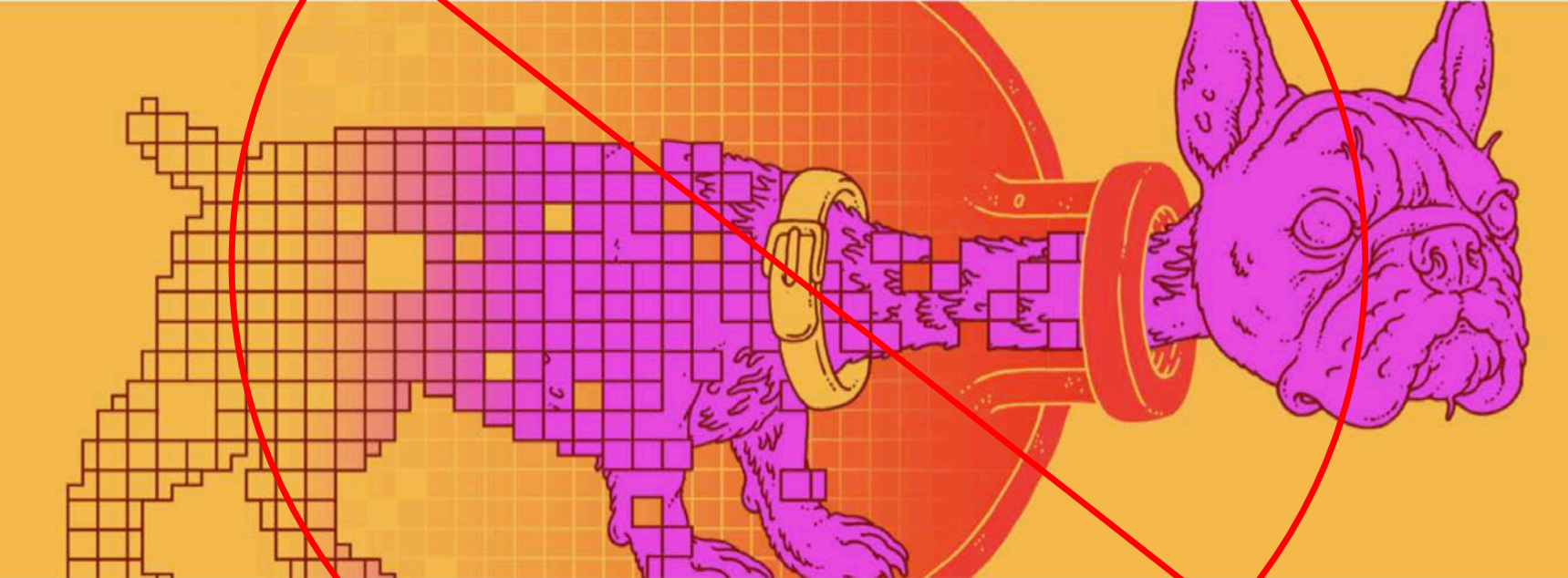
✓ fast, accurate word recognition

+

✓ reading fluency

Missing these foundational skills creates....

# BOTTLENECK!



# How to eliminate these bottlenecks:

## Word Recognition

- Assure all decoding rules are known and can be applied automatically
- Practice recognizing irregular words and reading them fluently
- Carefully sound out new words, then practice reading them fluently
- Cumulative word lists and flash cards, increasing automaticity
- Games and friendly competitions
- Use known words to challenge students' automatic recognition
- **LOTS OF READING!**

# How to eliminate these bottlenecks:

## Reading Fluency



Imagine 2 paths that begin as distinct ...





# But must converge to get to the destination



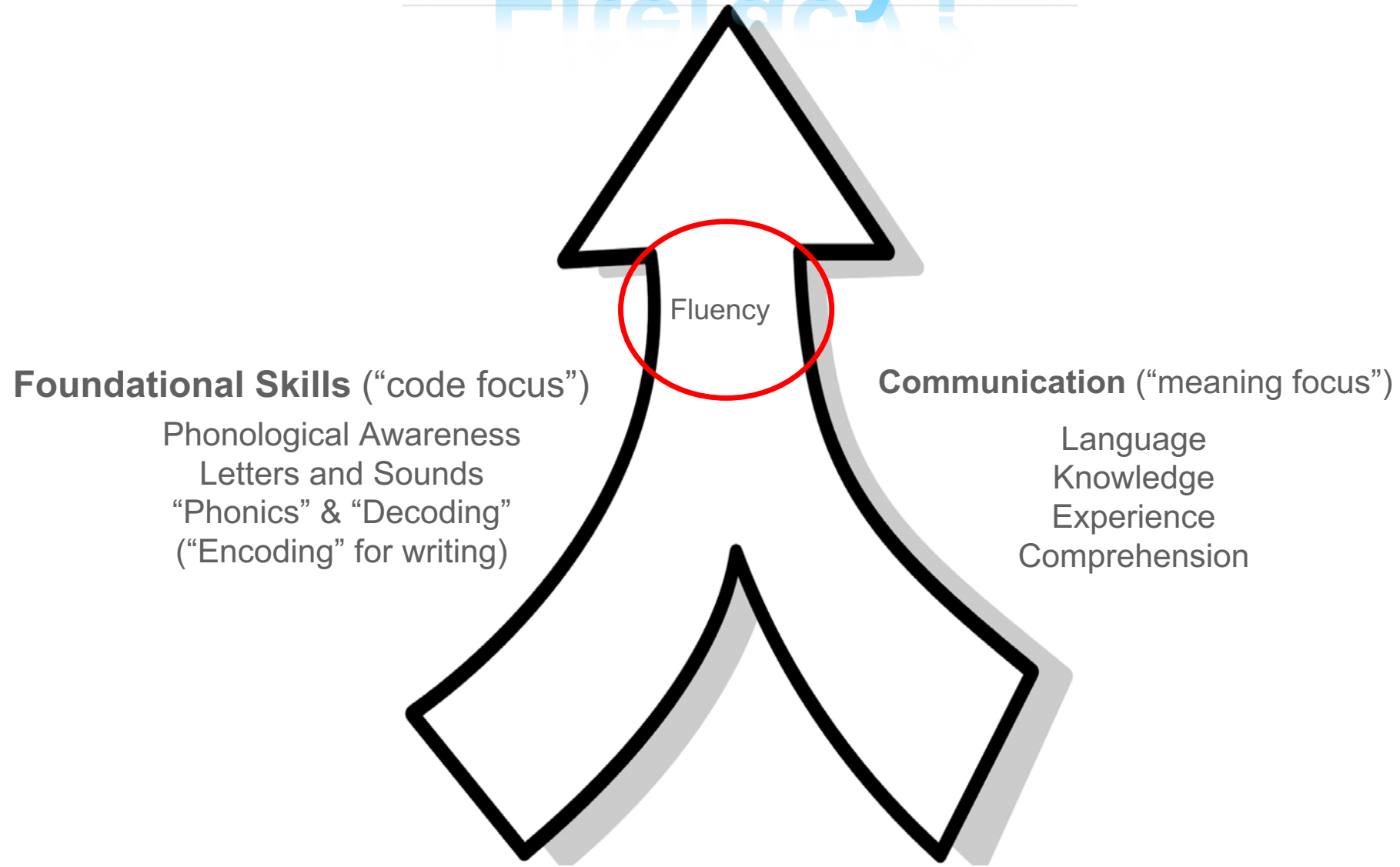
*What's the destination?*

***Literacy!***





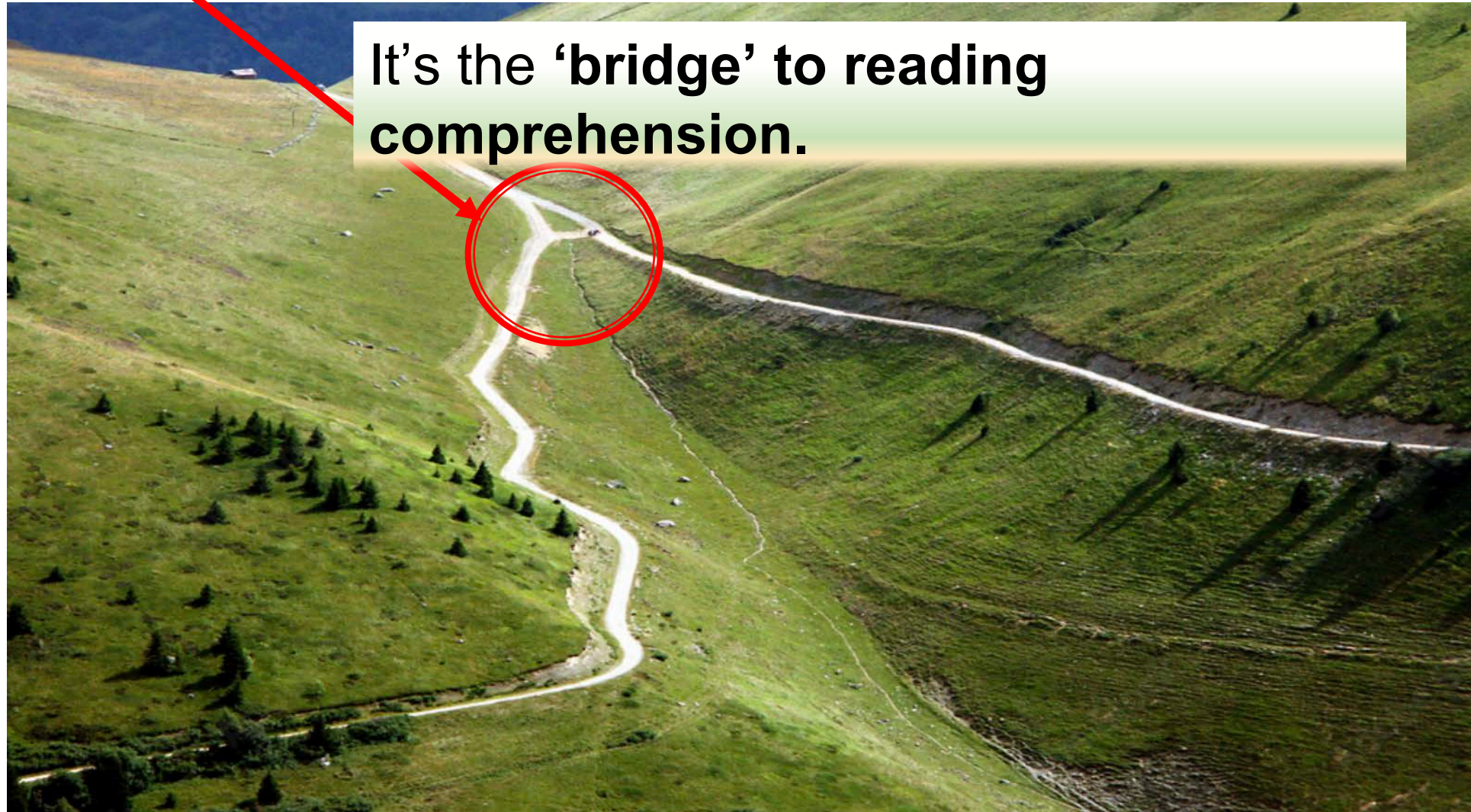
# What are the pathways to **Literacy?**



Fluency



# Fluency enables and reflects comprehension.



# How to eliminate these bottlenecks:

## Reading Fluency

Recognize that fluency is more than reading words quickly; it also includes

- Chunking word units into meaningful phrases
- Noting morphology and punctuation
- Processing connections within and between sentences
- Integrating intonational patterns to mark syntactic phrasing

*READ THIS ALOUD:*

*Natural resources can determine a country's economic output and productivity.*

# Context matters!

Read this text:

In a classroom debate, Joaquín said, “Economic output and productivity are more important than natural resources for a country.”

Helen responded, “*Natural resources can determine a country’s economic output and productivity.*”

Now, how would that sentence be read?

***Natural resources can DETERMINE a country’s economic output and productivity.***



# The four elements of fluent reading

- **Accuracy:** reading words correctly;
- **Automaticity:** recognizing words quickly, easily, and effortlessly;
- **Appropriate rate:** reading speed that fits the context;
- **Expression (aka prosody):** reading with inflection, intonation; attending to punctuation; reading meaningfully.

Think of **accuracy & automaticity** as  
***Unconscious Competence.***

# Fluent reading

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## Fluent reading

- **Appropriate rate:** reading speed that fits the context.
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# Some suggestions:

- Model fluent (all 4 elements!) reading with different text genres
- Students read familiar texts aloud “as if talking to someone”
- Students practice “sight reading” new but accessible texts
- Readers’ Theater, with opportunities to practice parts

*Model → Practice → Feedback*

# The centrality of reading fluency

Fluency further enables and reflects comprehension. For this reason, fluency is considered the **'bridge'** to **reading comprehension.**



The “House of Literacy” can be a wonderful edifice ....





So create and maintain a strong foundation.





# Check and strengthen, as needed.



Don't let this,



turn into this,



and this.



# At the same time, don't forget

- Knowledge of English
  - ✓ Vocabulary
  - ✓ Syntax
  - ✓ Discourse and other conventions
  - ✓ Genre features
- General knowledge
- Domain knowledge
- Comprehension strategies

It's a big challenge, to be sure

Our students and their families are  
depending on us.

# Research I drew on:

- Chard, D. et al. (2002). A Synthesis of Research on Effective Interventions for Building Reading Fluency with Elementary Students with Learning Disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Vol. 35(5) 386–406 .
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- Elleseff, T. (2017). Adolescent Assessments in Action: Clinical Reading Evaluation. Smart Speech Therapy (<https://www.smartspeechtherapy.com/adolescent-assessments-in-action-informal-reading-evaluation/>)
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- Lesaux, N. & Kieffer, M. (2010). Exploring Sources of Reading Comprehension Difficulties Among **Language Minority Learners** and Their Classmates in Early Adolescence. *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 47(3) 596–632. DOI: 10.3102/0002831209355469
- O'Connor, R. (2017). Reading Fluency and Students With Reading Disabilities: How Fast Is Fast Enough to Promote Reading Comprehension? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. 51(2):124-136. doi:10.1177/0022219417691835
- Paige et al. (2014). Interpreting the Relationships Among Prosody, Automaticity, Accuracy, and Silent Reading Comprehension in Secondary Students. *Journal of Literacy Research*, Vol. 46(2) 123–156. DOI: 10.1177/1086296X14535170
- Washburn, J. (2021). Reviewing Evidence on the Relations Between Oral Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension for Adolescents. *Journal of Learning Disabilities* pp. 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222194211045122>



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## Learn the Science of Reading

- 7–10-week online course that teaches foundational skills and instructional practices based on the science of reading
- Learn to understand and recognize dyslexia and its warning signs
- Learn the structure of the English and Spanish language systems
- Includes the *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* and *Assessing Reading: Multiple Measures textbooks*
- Available for graduate credit

[www.corelearn.com/online-elementary-reading-academy](http://www.corelearn.com/online-elementary-reading-academy)

# Questions?



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