

Scarborough's Reading Rope: A Groundbreaking Infographic

Share This:   

Volume 7, Issue 2
April 2018

Hollis Scarborough—creator of the famous Reading Rope and senior scientist at Haskins Laboratories—is a leading researcher of early language development and its connection to later literacy.

Dr. Scarborough's association with the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) goes back to 1994 when she served as associate editor of the *Annals of Dyslexia* until 2002. In 2009, she received IDA's highest honor, the Samuel Torrey Orton Award. Dr. Scarborough continues her IDA affiliation as a member of both IDA's Council of Advisors and IDA's Scientific Advisory Board. Her contributions on a national level (e.g., the Research Council, Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, and the Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children) have positively influenced the reading instruction in the United States.

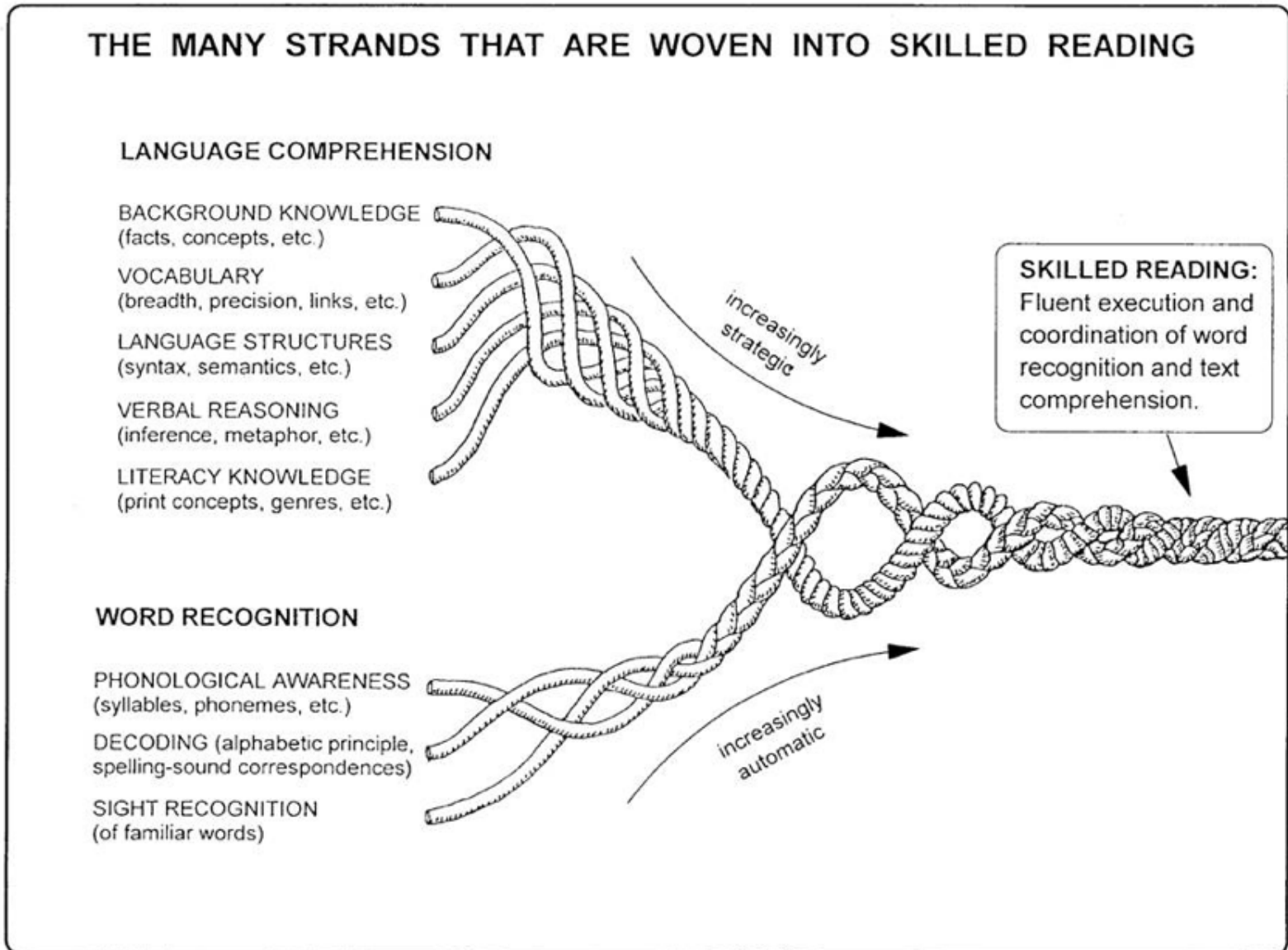
The genesis of the Reading Rope dates back to Scarborough's lectures for parents on the complexities involved in learning to read. Originally, she spoke of skilled reading as resembling the "strands" of a rope, using pipe cleaners to illustrate the interconnectedness and interdependence of all the components.

The Reading Rope consists of lower and upper strands. The word-recognition strands (phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition of familiar words) work together as the reader becomes accurate, fluent, and increasingly automatic with repetition and practice. Concurrently, the language-comprehension strands (background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge) reinforce one another and then weave together with the word-recognition strands to produce a skilled reader. This does not happen overnight; it requires instruction and practice over time.

Infographics are visual presentations with minimal text that help make complex information easy to digest, remember, and share. They have been around for years, but digital tools and social media have increased their proliferation. At IDA, we harness the power of infographics to make complex material accessible to a wide audience—the families, educators, advocates, researchers, and policymakers who need good information for effective decision making and collaboration on behalf of those who struggle to learn to read.

For many children, learning to read is a challenging undertaking. The Reading Rope, created by Dr. Hollis Scarborough, captures the essence of this task. We are thrilled that Dr. Scarborough has granted us permission to display the seminal Reading Rope in our [gallery \(https://dyslexiaida.org/infographics\)](https://dyslexiaida.org/infographics). One of the first and best

Infographics in the field, the Reading Rope is brilliant in its simplicity, but profound in its instructional implications. Now it is easy for you to share!



(<https://dyslexiaida.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/readingrope-2010.jpg>)

The image, courtesy of the author, originally appeared in the following publication: Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook for research in early literacy* (pp. 97–110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Copyright © 2018 International Dyslexia Association (IDA). Opinions expressed in *The Examiner* and/or via links do not necessarily reflect those of IDA.

We encourage sharing of Examiner articles. If portions are cited, please make appropriate reference. Articles may not be printed for the purpose of resale. Permission to republish this article is available from info@dyslexiaida.org.