Teaching basic reading skills effectively and efficiently with research-supported practices

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Basic reading skills
Research-supported practices

• Effective
• Efficient
Designed to help with this...

\[ \text{ðə fɪsɪŋ kɪŋ} \]

\[ e \ kɪŋ wɔz fɪsɪŋ. ðə kɪŋ kæt e fɪs. ðə fɪs wɔz θɪk. ðə fɪs fɪn wɔz θɪn. ðə kɪŋ ðæt, "ɪz ðə θɪŋ e fɪs?" ðə kɪŋ ðæt ænd ðæt. ðə fɪs ðæt wɔz kæt dɪd nət! \]
What practices should be used?

EFFECTIVE
Can we prevent or remediate reading difficulties?

Yes
Prevention works

Very structured early reading intervention can prevent reading problems in all but the very most struggling readers.

Table 2
Numbers and Percentages of Children, in Respective Remediated Groups, Whose Percentile Ranks for the Basic Skills Cluster Were Within Given Reading Achievement Ranges at the End of First Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of remediation</th>
<th>≤15%</th>
<th>16–30%</th>
<th>31–45%</th>
<th>&gt;45%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small group instruction by school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several days of tutoring by school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily tutoring by tutors trained by project staff</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Children are grouped by percentile ranking on the Basic Skills Cluster of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests—Revised at the end of first grade.

Compton, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bryant, 2006; Fuchs et al., 2008; McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005; Vadas, Jenkins, & Pool, 2000; Vaughn et al., 2010; Vellutino et al., 1996
Good Intervention can change how the brain processes words

Struggling readers who receive effective beginning reading instruction start processing words like their peers without disabilities

Barquero, Davis, & Cutting, 2013; Shaywitz et al., 2004
Basic skills instruction improves outcomes for students with reading disability

Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows (2005); also National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000) and Stuebing et al. (2008)
Two foci for beginning reading instruction

Phonological awareness

Phonics

Use this information to choose new curricula and evaluate practices used in classrooms
Phonological awareness

the ability to detect and manipulate sound units of various sizes
Advice for teaching phonological awareness

- short: practicing 5 min or less each day
- focused: oral segmenting and blending
- linked to phonics: using the sounds with letters
Focused tasks:
Oral segmenting and blending

**Oral segmenting task**
- The word is *cat*. What word?
  - *Cat.*
- Say the sounds in *cat*.
  (Then, put up fingers)
  - */k/* ... */a/* ... */t/*.
- Good. What word?
  (Sweep hand across)
  - *Cat.*

**Oral blending task**
- “Listen. I’ll say the sounds. You say the word.
- */d/* ... */o/* ... */g/*
  (Put up fingers for sounds)
- What word?
  (Sweep hand across)
  - *Dog.*
Phonics

A method of teaching reading by connecting letters with sounds and using these to sound out words
Critical importance of phonics

• Linking sounds to letters to pronounce words is exactly what beginning reading is about

• Emphasize **using the letters in the word**
Is phonics *really* helpful?

- English is an alphabetic language
English is an Alphabetic Language

- Alphabetic Principle:
  Idea that **letters** represent sounds

\[
s = /s/ \\
\alpha = /\alpha/ \\
t = /t/
\]
Is Phonics Really Helpful?

- It is an incredibly messy alphabetic language
- English is an alphabetic language
### The alphabetic principle: English versus other Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>% words</th>
<th>% nonwords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What percentage of words can first graders read?

Seymour, Aro, Erskine, & the A8 Cost Action Network, 2003
Is phonics really helpful?

How many spellings can you identify for the “Long A” (/ā/) sound?

cake major sail ballet
play neighbor vein
aerospace they great

Venezky, 1999
But even the worst offenders partly work /ˈvɪt əlz/

victuals

who

eye
“The complexity of English orthography cannot be an excuse for not teaching the principles and exemplary regularities in the system” (Perfetti, 2003, p. 18).

There are many parts of the letter-sound system that DO work, and we must teach those things.
Techniques embedded in some curricula have little evidence of value.

What if we don’t emphasize letter-sound relationships?

carnival
The Great Con

English follows the alphabetic principle

c says /k/
c also says /s/
ch says /ch/
ck says /k/
e says /e/
ea says /e/
e says /ee/

Lovett et al., 2000; Miller et al., 2015
Teach sound-spellings and phonograms

Sound spellings

CLOCK
↓↓↓↓↓
klōk

Consolidated alphabetic

Phonograms

CR ATE
↓↓
kr
at

Ehri, 1992
For sound-spellings:
Teach a blending strategy

What word?

/thirst/

/thirst/

/ir

/th/
Stage/phase theory supports the use of phonograms (body-rime) units also.

- Prealphabetic
- Partial alphabetic
- Full alphabetic
- Consolidated alphabetic
- Sound spellings

Ehri, 1992
How to find useful sound-spellings

Grapheme-phoneme correspondences

Phonograms

- \textit{ind} = /ɪnd/
- \textit{ose} = /ɜz/
- \textit{ould} = /ood/ (like /good/)
- \textit{ore} = /or/
- \textit{ound} = /ownd/
- \textit{ight} = /ɪt/
- \textit{ing} = /ɪŋ/
- \textit{all} = /ɔl/
- \textit{ave} = /æv/
- \textit{old} = /öld/
- \textit{ear} = /ɜr/
- \textit{alk} = /ok/

http://devinkearns.org/phinder/
4  Word List

1  Letter Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Pattern</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>ar</th>
<th>ck</th>
<th>e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ea</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>igh</td>
<td>ie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>oa</td>
<td>ow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| qu | x | y | ...

3  Sound Spellings Selected

Search Letter Pattern

3  Sound Spellings Selected

Frequency

road  r = /r/  oa = /ō/  d = /d/
load  l = /l/  oa = /ō/  d = /d/
aproach  a = /ə/  pp = /p/  r = /r/  oa = /ō/  ch = /ch/
goal  g = /g/  oa = /ō/  l = /l/
coast  c = /k/  oa = /ō/  s = /s/  t = /t/
loaded  l = /l/  oa = /ō/  d = /d*/  e = /ə/  d = /d/
boat  b = /b/  oa = /ō/  t = /t/
goals  g = /g/  oa = /ō/  l = /l/  s = /z/
floating  f = /f/  l = /l/  oa = /ō/  t = /d*/  i = /i/  ng = /ng/
coat  c = /k/  oa = /ō/  t = /t/
loading  l = /l/  oa = /ō/  d = /d*/  i = /i/  ng = /ng/
loan  l = /l/  oa = /ō/  n = /n/
Emphasize carefully ordered and structured practice

practice > rules
How can the be taught as quickly as possible?

EFFICIENT
Be clear and concise

Rhyming words sound the same at the end

“Ch makes the /ch/ sound.”

omit needless words

It’s as short as it could possibly be!

The letter c can make two different sounds. Sometimes it will say /k/. This happens when it is followed by a, o, u, or any consonant except h. In other cases, c makes the /s/ sound, when it comes before e, i, or y.

C says /s/ when e, i, and y come after it.

“Stop you missed a word. Can you figure it out?”

original

Point at word. “Check it.”

revised
Maintain a high level of correct responses

while teaching
80%

during independent practice
90-95%

Ellis and Worthington (1994) reported that some studies showed correct response rates lower than 10%.

When questions are too difficult, students cannot correctly answer questions even when they know the answers.
“Although higher-order questions (e.g., those aimed at synthesis and evaluation) are superior, low-order questions, at least to some degree, do appear to serve the positive functions of (a) engaging students at high rates of responding, (b) providing students with high rates of success, and (c) increasing student achievement levels” (Ellis & Worthington, 1994, p. 87)
Ask the right kind of questions for beginning reading

• Ms. D is teaching the magic E rule
  – The rule: If a word has a vowel-consonant-E pattern, the vowel says its long sound (e.g., bake or white)
  – The objective: To correctly state the magic E rule and read words that contain a magic E accurately

What’s the level of the objective?

1. Describing the rule = Knowledge
2. Using the rule correctly = Application
Which of these questions is best for asking about the rule?

- Why is the E magic?
- In *cake*, why does the *a* say its name?
- What does the E do to the vowel?
- When you see vowel-consonant-E, what does the vowel say?
- What happens if the E is not there?
- What is this word (*point at lake*)?
- What is the magic E rule?

The objective: To **correctly state the magic E rule** and read words that contain a **magic E** accurately.
Get all students involved and frequently

What does it mean?

Involving almost everyone

How is it helpful?

It keeps most students focused
Choral Response/Call-and-Response Strategy

http://explicitinstruction.org/
What methods do NOT involve many students?

Can someone raise their hand and tell me...?
In summary

• Teach effectively in ways that emphasize sound-spellings and phonics practice
• Use pedagogical practices that improve efficiency and lead to greater practice and learning time
Thank you!

• Get your doctorate in special education at UConn!

• We have funding (free classes, a stipend, and health insurance) for people to get their degrees!

• We have some very cool opportunities!

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