

Articles to Read When Making Decisions Related to Types of Instruction, Materials, and Programs for Children Learning to Read and Write

Compiled By Kim Larson, January 2007

Duke, N. K., V. S. Bennett-Armistead, and E. M. Roberts (2003). Bridging the gap between learning to read and reading to learn. In D. M. Barone & L. M. Morrow (Eds.) *Literacy and young children: Research-based Practices* (pp 226-242). New York: Guilford.

This chapter is organized around three key points:

- *Informational text is scarce in primary grade classrooms.*
- *Available research does not justify the scarcity of informational text in primary grade or other early childhood classrooms.*
- *There are a number of arguments for greater attention to informational text in early childhood classrooms, although more research is certainly needed.*

Discussion of research relevant to these points with suggestions for instructional leaders in this area.

Ehri, L. C. & T. Roberts (2006). The roots of learning to read and write: Acquisition of letters and phonemic awareness. In Dickinson, D. K. & S. B. Neuman (Eds.) *Handbook of Early Literacy Research Volume 2*. New York: Guilford.

In order for beginners to succeed in learning to read in a language such as English, they must acquire knowledge of the alphabetic writing system. The most important acquisitions at the start are phonemic awareness and letter knowledge. These provide the foundation enabling beginners to move into reading and spelling.

Graves, M. & S. M. Watts-Taffe (2002). The place of word consciousness in a research-based vocabulary program. In Farstrup, A. E. & S. Jay Samuels (Eds.) *What research has to say about reading instruction, 3rd edition*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

A summary of current research related to vocabulary instruction, as well as research-based instructional strategies.

Hiebert, E. (2006). The fluency curriculum and text elements that support it. In P. Schwanenflugel & M. Khun (Eds.), *Fluency instruction for shared reading: Two whole class approaches*. New York: Guilford.

This chapter describes:

- *The importance of attending to the words in texts that students read as part of repeated and guided reading fluency instruction*
- *A fluency curriculum that consists of high-frequency words and words with consistent rimes (i.e. vowel and consonant patterns) that appear frequently in texts for young children*
- *Evidence that the fluency levels of beginning and struggling readers are supported when repeated and guided reading occurs with texts that follow the fluency curriculum*
- *Sources for texts that give students experiences with fluency curriculum*

Hiebert, E., L. A. Martin, and S. Menon (2005). *Are there alternatives in reading textbooks? An examination of three beginning reading programs*. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 21: 7-32. Taylor & Francis, Inc.

The first-grade components of three textbook programs – mainstream basal, combined phonics and literature, and phonics emphasis – were compared on cognitive load (e.g. number of different words) and linguistic content (e.g., number of monosyllabic, simple vowel words). Three levels of three components of a program – literature anthologies, decodable texts, and leveled texts – were compared.

Juel, C. & C. Minden-Cupp (2004). Learning to read words: Linguistic units and instructional strategies. In Ruddell, R. B. & N. J. Unrau (Eds.) *Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading 5th Edition*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

In the current study, the researchers examined whether specific forms of instruction might differentially affect students with varying levels of phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and other early literacy foundations. The goal was to begin to identify specific instructional practices that appear to best foster learning to read words for particular profiles of children.

Mathes, P. G., C. Denton, J. Fletcher, J. Anthony, D. Francis, & C. Schatschneider (2005). *The effects of theoretically different instruction and student characteristics on the skills of struggling readers*. Reading Research Quarterly 40(2), 148-182. International Reading Association.

This study reinforced the added value of supplemental intervention provided to first-grade students who demonstrate risk factors for reading difficulty. Likewise, the results of the study indicate that interventions originating from different theoretical viewpoints, but both of which emphasized word recognition strategies and contain elements previously identified as essential in early reading instruction, can be effective for at-risk first-grade readers. In fact, no reliable interactions were detected between child characteristics and success in one type of intervention or another. We propose that these findings lend support to the argument that it is time to stop debating the "best" method for providing early reading intervention. Time is better devoted to determining how to overcome the great challenges that exist in getting effective interventions placed into schools. Likewise, our findings support the idea that schools can be allowed to choose from among good choices those interventions that best fit personal philosophies and personnel talents.

McDonald Conner, C., F. J. Morrison, and L. E. Katch (2004). *Beyond the reading wars: Exploring the effect of child-instruction interactions on growth in early reading*. Scientific Studies of Reading, 8(4), 305-336. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

This study examined the influence of interactions between first graders' fall language-literacy skills (vocabulary and decoding) and classroom instructional practices on their spring decoding scores. Findings revealed that specific patterns of instructional activities differentially predicted children's decoding skill growth. Children with low initial decoding scores achieved greater decoding growth in classrooms with more time spent in teacher-managed explicit decoding (TME) instruction. In contrast, for children with initially high decoding scores, amount of TME had no effect. Children with low initial vocabulary scores achieved greater decoding score growth in classrooms with less child-managed implicit (CMI) instruction but with increasing amounts of CMI instruction as the school year progressed. However, children with high initial vocabulary scores achieved greater decoding growth in classrooms with more time spent in CMI activities and in consistent amounts throughout the school year. Children's initial decoding and vocabulary scores also directly and positively affected their decoding score growth.

Pressley, M., R. Wharton-McDonald, and J. Mistretta (1998). Effective beginning literacy instruction: Dialectical, scaffolded, and contextualized. In Metsala, J. & L. Ehri (Eds.), *Word Recognition in Beginning Literacy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

We do not believe that effective instruction is most likely to come about from dedication either to organismic (whole language) or mechanistic (direct instruction) philosophy. Rather, our view is that insights about how to teach effectively should come from careful study of effective teaching, with such analyses, as much as possible, free of philosophical biases.

Stahl, S., A., and K. M. Heubach (2005). Fluency-oriented reading instruction. *Journal of Literacy Research*, V. 37, (25-60).

This paper reports the results of a two-year project designed to reorganize basal reading instruction to stress fluent reading and automatic word recognition. The reorganized reading program had three components: a redesigned basal reading lesson that included repeated reading and partner reading, a choice reading period during the day, and a home reading program. Over two years of program implementation, students made significantly greater than expected growth in reading achievement in all 14 classes.