

Research-Based Methods
of **Reading**
Instruction

Grades K–3

➤ Acknowledgments ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ vii

➤ Introduction ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 1

1 ➤ Why Science Matters ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 3

2 ➤ Phonemic Awareness ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 8

3 ➤ Phonics and Word Study ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 30

4 ➤ Fluency ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 49

5 ➤ Vocabulary ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 74

6 ➤ Comprehension ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 98

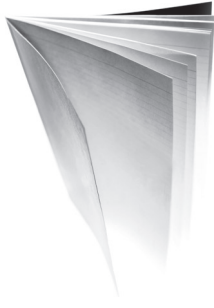
7 ➤ Putting It All Together ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 125

➤ Glossary ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 134

➤ References ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 140

➤ Index ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 145

➤ About the Authors ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ 151



Introduction

THIS BOOK IS DESIGNED TO SHOW TEACHERS WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM science-based reading research, and how they can best use that research to teach initial reading effectively. It is also designed to provide dozens of classroom activities that promote reading, drawn from practices that have been successful in actual classrooms and are based on solid research. The material in this book can be used with all students regardless of any special issues or needs, including those with dyslexia, at-risk for reading problems, or who simply require additional instruction to become successful readers.

Who benefits from scientifically based approaches to reading? Everyone! Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reports state that as many as 38 percent of all 4th graders cannot read well enough to comprehend a simple children's book (2003). Without science-based approaches to reading, students with reading or language difficulties, attention or learning problems, a specific disability related to reading, and limited proficiency in English also risk being left behind.

Many students will learn to read as long as teachers use a substantial and consistent approach. We can optimize learning for students by using approaches that are validated by research. This book provides teachers and administrators with the essential elements of proven reading methods, and with classroom lessons for teaching them. The essential elements identified in this book—phonemic awareness, phonics/word study, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—and the corresponding classroom activities relate both to Reading First and to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

FIGURE 2.2 ➤ **Guidelines for Teaching Phonemic Awareness**

- Determine the phonemic awareness skills the students in your class have and need to learn. Provide group activities that address the needs of most or all of the students. Provide small group activities to address the specific needs of selected students.
- Based on each student's level of development, identify the tasks that need to be mastered.
- Model each activity, demonstrating what you want students to do and how you want them to do it. Then provide students with an opportunity to practice the task. For example, "Watch me, I'm going to say each of the sounds in the word *mast* separately, then I'm going to put them together and say the word. Watch my lips and fingers: /m/, /a/, /s/, /t/ (put one finger up for each sound until four fingers are up), *mast*. Now do it with me, "*mast*: /m/ /a/ /s/ /t/." Watch to be sure students hold up one finger for each sound.
- Use manipulatives, body movements, or fingers to make the auditory or oral tasks more visible. For example, "Watch me, I'm going to take one step sideways each time I say a sound in the word *cap*. /c/, /a/, /p/ (teacher takes one step for each sound). Now you stand up. After I say a word, you say the sounds with me and take one step sideways for each sound in the word." Teachers can use Elkonin boxes to move markers or write letters, or have students clap or use their fingers to signal the phoneme. (see p. 23)
- Proceed from less to more difficult tasks, considering:
 - Identifying syllables and separating onset and rime are easier than blending and segmenting phonemes.
 - Segmenting and blending phonemes in the initial position is easier than blending phonemes in the final or medial position.
 - Segmenting and blending words with two phonemes is easier than blending three phonemes. Three phonemes are easier to segment and blend than four phonemes.
- Provide positive and corrective feedback and many opportunities for practice and review. Allow students to answer together in a group and give students opportunities to respond individually.

Source: Adapted from information provided in Bos and Vaughn (2002) and Smith, Simmons, and Kame'enui (1998).

The two most important aspects of phonemic awareness are segmenting and blending (NRP, 2000). Activities for involving students in segmenting sounds and then blending them together can use both real words and nonsense words. Students can use letters to manipulate phonemes

and apply their knowledge of segmenting and blending when they read and write new words. When oral blending and segmenting are paired with letters, you can explicitly teach the alphabetic principle (Goswami, 2000; Greaney, Tunmer, & Chapman, 1997). The alphabetic

Tape-Recorded Readings. These can be books on tape or books on CD-ROM accessed through the computer. In either case, the books are available to students and read aloud by a model. The important role of the teacher is to determine that students are following along and reading the text while the story is read aloud. Vocabulary and key concepts can be reviewed with students prior to the use of recorded readings.

Readers' Theater or Reading Performances. Students rehearse the script from a book, play, short story, or poem until they are highly fluent. Then they perform for a small group, their class, another class, or in front of parents and relatives. The critical aspect of the exercise is that students read a text repeatedly until they can recite it fluently and with prosody.

Partner Reading. This is when students read and reread passages with classmates. Teachers can pair more proficient readers with less proficient ones. The less proficient reader reads the passage first, followed by his or her partner. The students continue taking turns until they complete the text. (More partner reading exercises can be found in the "Instructional Activities" section of this chapter. Figure 4.1 provides some guidelines for partner reading.)

In summary, here are the critical elements that have been documented to improve reading fluency:

- Providing an explicit model of fluent reading. This model could be the teacher, a well-trained adult, another student, or even a cassette.

- Giving students multiple opportunities to read the same text. Students need many opportunities to read the same text over and over again. Teachers, trained adults, or students should provide corrective feedback. Two research studies suggest that students who reread passages at least twice outperform those who read a passage only once in both fluency and storytelling ability (O'Shea, Sindelar, & O'Shea, 1987; Sindelar, Monda, & O'Shea, 1990).
- Establishing performance criteria for the speed and accuracy of reading text. Teachers should establish baselines for the number of words students read correctly per minute in a specified text level, as well as systematically monitor fluency progress.

Some common instructional practices are not associated with improvements in fluency. In turn-taking or round-robin reading, for instance, teachers work with a small group of students, each of whom takes turns reading aloud briefly. This is not a fluency practice. Neither is Sustained Silent Reading, or Drop Everything and Read, an exercise in which teachers allocate a designated amount of time to reading and everyone including the teacher reads. As the National Reading Panel (2000) notes, "The demonstrated effectiveness of guided oral reading compared to the lack of demonstrated effectiveness of strategies encouraging independent silent reading suggests the importance of explicit compared to more implicit instructional approaches for improved fluency" (pp. 3–4).

Ms. Garcia, a 2nd grade teacher, who is concerned about the reading performance of her students. Most of them can read the words, but they often don't seem to understand what they read. Sometimes they partially understand what critical words mean, but not enough to grasp the author's intentions. Ms. Garcia is aware that many of her students cannot tell the main idea of a text after reading it, and is concerned that her students have more difficulty comprehending expository text than narrative text.

Ms. Garcia knows that understanding text is a critical skill that will be assessed on the statewide reading assessment to be given in the spring. She has spent considerable time asking her students questions, encouraging them to reread text to put together answers, and expanding on the ideas of students who interpret the text well, but she is very concerned that some of her students are not making progress. She knows that their understanding of the meanings of many of the words is limited, and they need additional vocabulary knowledge.

What will help Ms. Garcia's students? We can begin by understanding the two areas that her students have difficulty with: vocabulary and comprehension.

Oral vocabulary represents words that students learn to understand by listening to others speak and by using them themselves. When students learn to read, they bring their knowledge of oral vocabulary to print. When new words that are not part of a student's vocabulary appear in print, they are not readily understood. Students can expand their understanding of word meanings through explicit instruction, information

provided in text, or repeated exposure to the word. *Reading vocabulary* consists of the words that students understand when they read them in text.

While reading is a helpful means for improving word knowledge, many of the students with the poorest vocabularies are also those who read the least. The high road to vocabulary for all students is to read, read, read.

Hayes and Ahrens (1988) analyzed the types of words used in various print sources and oral language settings, as shown in Figure 5.1. The first column of the figure lists the major print sources, which vary from simple (preschool books) to difficult (scientific articles). The second column shows the rank of the average word in each source based on difficulty. Higher numbers indicate that more challenging, less common vocabulary is used. Some of the findings, such as the fact that less common words are found in scientific articles, aren't surprising, but others are. For instance, did you realize that preschool or children's books expose you to more challenging vocabulary than do prime-time adult TV shows? With the exception of courtroom testimony, reading is a more valuable way to extend your vocabulary than watching TV or listening to others talk.

For young students teachers can make a huge difference in vocabulary knowledge by

- Teaching words and their extended meanings systematically,
- Providing multiple opportunities to practice using key vocabulary and engaging in oral language,
- Ensuring that word knowledge is an ongoing part of the instructional day, and