
Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills

SECOND EDITION

edited by

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Table 1.1. Consensus from scientifically based reading research on factors influencing becoming a good reader

Oral language

Long before children begin to read, they need language and literacy experiences at home and in preschool to develop a wide range of knowledge that will support them later in acquiring linguistic skills necessary for reading. These include language play such as saying rhymes, writing messages, listening to and examining books, developing oral vocabulary and verbal reasoning, and learning the purposes of reading. Exposure to reading aloud and oral language play fosters development of phonemic awareness.

Phonemic awareness

Reading development depends on the acquisition of phonemic awareness and other phonological processes. Phonemic awareness is the ability to understand the sound structure in spoken words. To learn to read, however, children must also be able to pay attention to the sequence of sounds or phonemes in words and to manipulate them. This is difficult because of the coarticulation of the separate sounds in spoken words. Children learn to do this by engaging in intensive oral play activities of sufficient duration, such as identifying and making rhymes, counting and working with syllables in words, segmenting initial and final phonemes, hearing and blending sounds, analyzing initial and final sounds of words, and segmenting words fully before learning to read and during beginning reading. This training facilitates and predicts later reading and spelling achievement.

Alphabet knowledge

It is essential that children learn the alphabet and be able to say the names of the letters, recognize the shapes, and write the letters. These skills are powerful predictors of reading success.

Phonics

Along with instruction on letter names, children need well-designed and focused phonics instruction to learn letter–sound correspondences. Fast and efficient decoding and word-reading skills rest on the alphabetic principle: how the written spellings of words systematically represent the phonemes in the spoken words. The beginning reader must begin to connect the 26 letters of the alphabet with the approximately 44 phonemes in English.

Practice with decodable texts

Children need to practice new sounds and letters using materials (i.e., controlled decodable texts) that directly reinforce the new information and that review what children already know for maximum gains in fluency and automaticity.

Exposure to sight words and irregular words

Sight word reading happens when children are able to read words from memory. Repeated exposures build the alphabetic features in memory so words can be read by sight.

It is also important for children to have a store of high-frequency irregularly spelled words so that they can read more than just controlled texts when they are ready.

Accurate and automatic word recognition

Fluency and comprehension depend on accurate and automatic word recognition. Slow decoders are poor at comprehension due to reduced attentional and memory resources. Systematic word recognition instruction on common, consistent letter–sound relationships and syllable patterns supports successful word recognition skills.

Spelling

When children are familiar with the spelling regularities of English, their reading and spelling are strengthened. Opportunities to apply the predictable and logical rules and spelling patterns that match the reading patterns being learned give children a double immersion in the information. Spelling is an essential and interconnected complement to reading instruction.

Comprehension

Comprehension depends on the activation of relevant background knowledge and is related strongly to oral language comprehension and vocabulary growth. Along with explicit vocabulary instruction, metacognitive strategies such as questioning, predicting, making inferences, clarifying misunderstandings, and summarizing while reading should be included in comprehension instruction.

Systematic, explicit instruction

Poor readers need highly systematic, structured, explicit, and intensive one-to-one or small-group instruction that recognizes their developmental level in phonemic awareness, word recognition, and comprehension processes. Implicit instruction has been found to be counterproductive with children with learning disabilities or children at risk for not learning to read and produces fewer gains in word recognition and decoding skills than does explicit, intensive instruction based on systematic phonics.

Well-trained teachers

Well-trained, accomplished teachers who can analyze instruction and monitor progress, set goals, and continue to learn about effective practices are the mainstay of children's success in learning to read.

Sources: Adams, 1990; Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, 1998; Lyon, 1999; Torgesen, 2004.



ACTIVITY 1

Terms for Research and Multisensory Teaching

Chapters
1 and 2

Match each term with the correct definition.

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|----|---|
| 1. _____ | qualitative research | a. | Area of brain for articulation and slower word analysis |
| 2. _____ | quantitative research | b. | Related to muscle movement and memory |
| 3. _____ | experimental research | c. | Early term for dyslexia |
| 4. _____ | quasi-experimental research | d. | Area of the brain for step-by-step word analysis |
| 5. _____ | metacognition | e. | A specific sensory pathway |
| 6. _____ | occipital-temporal region | f. | Related to touch |
| 7. _____ | parieto-temporal region | g. | Area for skilled reading |
| 8. _____ | left inferior frontal region | h. | Related to seeing |
| 9. _____ | auditory | i. | Pertaining to the simultaneous use of multiple senses |
| 10. _____ | visual | j. | Area of brain for visual-verbal associations |
| 11. _____ | modality | k. | Research in which the subjects are randomly assigned to experimental and control groups |
| 12. _____ | kinesthetic | l. | Conscious choice of and evaluation of the strategies used to accomplish a task |
| 13. _____ | multisensory | m. | Research conducted without randomized assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups |
| 14. _____ | tactile | n. | Related to hearing |
| 15. _____ | word blindness | o. | A specific learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities |
| 16. _____ | angular gyrus | p. | Research in which numerical data are collected and statistically |
| 17. _____ | dyslexia | | |