

Archived Information

Research-Based Instruction in Reading

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Elements of Reading Instruction

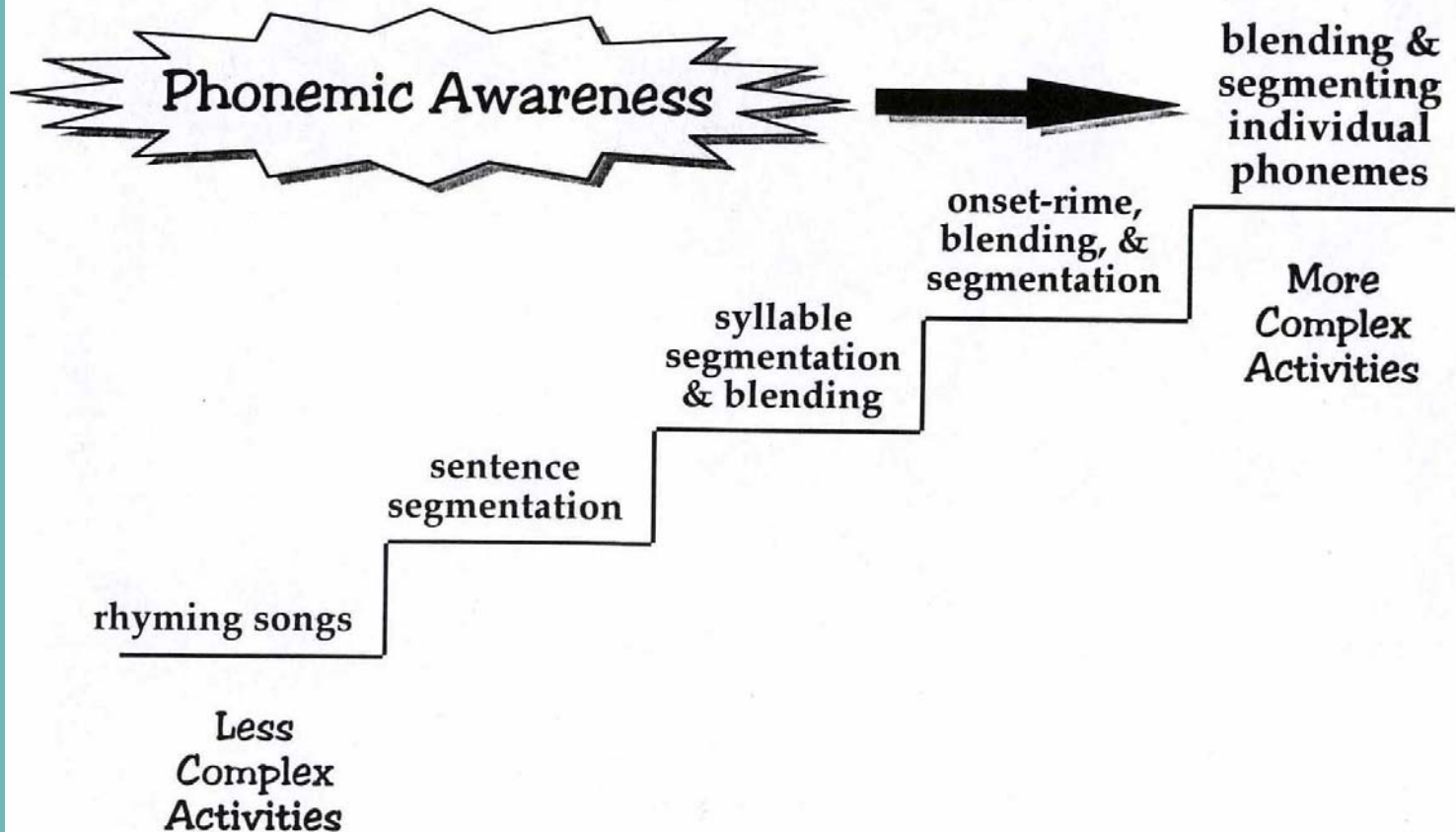
- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Text comprehension

Phonemic Awareness

- The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds--phonemes--in spoken words.
- A part of phonological awareness.



Phonological Awareness Concepts Continuum



Important Points about Phonemic Awareness :

- Phonemic awareness can be taught and learned.
- Phonemic awareness can help students learn to read and spell.
- The relationship between phonemic awareness and learning to read and spell is reciprocal: having phonemic awareness helps children learn to read and spell; learning to read and spell words by working with letter-sound relationships improves children's phonemic awareness.

Important Points about Phonemic Awareness, continued

- Phonemic awareness instruction can help preschoolers, kindergartners, first graders, and older, less able readers.
- The most important forms of phonemic awareness to teach are blending and segmentation, because they are the processes that are centrally involved in reading and spelling words.

Two Important Phonemic Awareness Activities

- **Phoneme blending.** Children listen to a sequence of separately spoken phonemes and then combine the phonemes to form a word. /d/ /o/ /g/ is *dog*. (This is the process used in decoding words.)
- **Phoneme segmentation.** Children break a spoken word into its separate phonemes. There are four sounds in *truck*: /t/ /r/ /u/ /k/. (This is the process used in spelling words phonetically: “invented spelling.”)

Some Cautions About Phonemic Awareness Instruction

- Phonemic awareness instruction is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It should be oriented toward helping children gain insight about the relationship between spoken sounds and letters.
- Phonemic awareness should not be the entire reading program.

Phonics

- The relationship between the letters (graphemes) of written language and the sounds (phonemes) of spoken language.
- Phonics instruction is teaching children these letter-sound relationships.

Important Points about Phonics Instruction

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves kindergarten and first-grade children's word recognition and spelling.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension.

Important Points about Phonics Instruction, continued

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is effective for children from various social and economic levels.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is particularly beneficial for children who are having difficulty learning to read and who are at risk for developing future reading problems.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is most effective when introduced early (K or 1).

What is Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction?

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction provides instruction in a carefully selected and useful set of letter-sound relationships and then organizes the introduction of these relationships into a logical instructional sequence.
- Children have ample opportunities to practice and review the relationships they are learning.

Some Approaches to Phonics Instruction

- **Synthetic (explicit) phonics**--Children learn how to convert letters or letter combinations into sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form recognizable words. Children have learned the letters *m*, *a*, *n* and the corresponding sounds /m/ /a/ /n/. They blend them to make the word *man*.
- **Analytic (implicit) phonics**--Children learn to analyze letter-sound relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation. Children see and say the word *man*. The teacher tells the students that the letter *m* makes the beginning sound in *man*.

Some Approaches to Phonics Instruction, continued

- **Analogy-based phonics.** Children learn to use parts of word families they know to identify words they don't know that have similar parts. Children use their knowledge of key words such as *must* and *ate* to read the word *frustrate*.

Some Cautions about Phonics Instruction

- Phonics instruction is not an entire reading program for beginning readers.
- “The best way to get children to refine and extend their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences is through repeated opportunities to read.” -*Becoming a Nation of Readers*.
- Approximately two years of phonics instruction is sufficient for most students. If phonics instruction begins early in kindergarten, it should be completed by the end of first grade. If phonics instruction begins early in first grade, it should be completed by the end of second grade.

Fluency

- Oral reading fluency is the ability to read with accuracy, and with an appropriate rate, expression, and phrasing.

Important Points about Fluency

- Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.
- Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement.
- Attention to fluency is often neglected in reading instruction.

Why Fluency is Important

- More fluent readers focus their attention on making connections among the ideas in a text and between these ideas and their background knowledge. Therefore, they are able to focus on comprehension.
- Less fluent readers must focus their attention primarily on decoding and accessing the meaning of individual words. Therefore, they have little attention left for comprehending the text.

Improving Fluency

- Model fluent reading, then have students reread the text on their own.
- Have students repeatedly read passages aloud with guidance.
- Have students reread text that is reasonably easy (at their independent reading level).
- Have students practice orally rereading text using methods such as student-adult reading, choral reading, partner reading, tape-assisted reading, or readers' theatre.

Vocabulary

- Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Vocabulary plays an important part in learning to read. Children use words in their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print.
- Vocabulary is also important in reading comprehension. Readers cannot understand what they are reading unless they know what most of the words mean.

How Vocabulary is Learned

- **Indirectly.** Children learn the meanings of most words indirectly, through everyday experiences with oral and written language-- e.g., through conversations with adults, through being read to, and through reading extensively on their own.
- **Directly.** Children learn vocabulary directly when they are explicitly taught both individual words and word-learning strategies.

Teaching Individual Words

- Teaching specific words before reading helps both vocabulary learning and reading comprehension.
- Extended instruction that promotes active engagement with vocabulary improves word learning.
- Repeated exposures to vocabulary in many contexts aids word learning.

Teaching Word Learning Strategies

- How to use dictionaries and other reference aids to learn word meanings and to deepen knowledge of word meanings.
- How to use information about word parts (affixes, base words, word roots) to figure out the meanings of words in text (structural analysis).
- How to use context clues to determine word meanings.

Text Comprehension

- Comprehension is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading.
- Instruction in comprehension can help students understand what they read, remember what they read, and communicate with others about what they read.
- Research on text comprehension suggests what should be taught about text comprehension and how it should be taught.

What Should be Taught-- Key Comprehension Strategies

- Monitoring comprehension
- Using graphic and semantic organizers
- Answering questions
- Generating questions
- Recognizing story structure (and other text structures)
- Summarizing

How to Teach Comprehension Strategies

- Provide explicit (or direct) instruction: direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, application.
- Make use of cooperative learning.
- Help readers use comprehension strategies flexibly and in combination.