

1967 Learning to Read: The Great Debate, Jeanne Chall, Harvard University

Findings: A code emphasis tends to produce better overall reading achievement by the beginning of fourth grade than a meaning emphasis. At about the end of the first grade, meaning-emphasis programs tend to affect comprehension and vocabulary test scores adversely, mainly because the child does less well in word recognition (p.137).

1967 USOE First Grade Reading Studies

This project pooled the findings of 27 independent studies that were conducted under the direction of Guy Bond and Robert Dykstra to establish 'which of the many approaches to initial reading instruction produces superior reading and spelling achievement at the end of first grade.' (p. 348)

Findings: Word study skills need to be emphasized and taught systematically. This is best shown by the superiority of the approaches which augmented the basal readers with a phonetic emphasis, as compared to basal readers as usually taught (word memory). Direct instruction was deemed to be the most effective approach to teaching reading.

1985 Becoming a Nation of Readers, National Academy of Education

Findings: Classroom research shows that on the average, children who are taught phonics get off to a better start in learning to read than children who are not taught phonics (p. 37)

1990 Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning About Print, Adams, M.J.

Findings: 'The vast majority of program comparison studies indicate that approaches including systematic phonics instruction result in comprehension skills that are at least comparable to, and word recognition and spelling skills that are significantly better than, those that do not. Furthermore, approaches in which systematic code instruction is included alongside, meaning emphasis, language instruction, and connected reading, are found to result in superior reading achievement overall. And these conclusions seem at least as valid for children with low reading-readiness profiles as they are for their better prepared and more advantaged peers.' (p. 49)

1998 Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children, Snow, Burn & Griffin, Harvard University

Findings: There is converging research support for the proposition that getting started in reading depends critically on mapping the letters and the spelling of words onto the sounds and speech units that they represent. Failure to master word recognition impedes text comprehension... Kindergarten Instruction should be designed to provide practice with the sound structure of words, the recognition and production of letters, knowledge about print concepts, and familiarity with the basic purposes and mechanisms of reading and writing. First grade instruction should be designed to provide explicit instruction and practice with sound structure that leads to phonemic awareness, familiarity with spelling-sound correspondences and common spelling conventions and their use in identifying printed words, "sight" recognition of frequent words, and independent reading, including reading aloud. A wide variety of well-written and engaging texts below the children's frustration level should be provided. (pp. 321 – 322)

2000 The Report of the National Reading Panel

Congress appointed 'The Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, in consultation with the Secretary Education to assess the status of research-based knowledge, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read.'

Findings: Teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language helps them learn to read. Phonemic Awareness instruction produced positive effects on both word reading and pseudo-word reading, indicating that it helps children decode novel words as well as remember how to read familiar words. Phonemic Awareness also boosts reading comprehension. Systematic phonics instruction makes a bigger contribution to children's growth in reading comprehension than alternative programs providing unsystematic or no phonics instruction. Phonics instruction taught early proved much more effective than phonics instruction introduced after first grade. Phonics instruction produces the biggest impact on growth in reading when it begins in kindergarten or 1st grade before children have

learned to read independently. Systematic phonics instruction in kindergarten and 1st grade is highly beneficial, and children at these developmental levels are quite capable of learning phonemic and phonics concepts. The Panel's analysis determined that systematic instruction in the components of reading – phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension –was effective in teaching children to read.

2000 Progress in Understanding Reading (Twenty five years of research on the reading process) Stanovich

Findings: 'That direct instruction in alphabetic coding facilitates early reading acquisition is one of the most well established conclusions in all of behavioral science (Adams, 1990); Anderson et al., 1985; Chall, 1983b, 1989; Perfetti, 1985; Stanovich, 1986b). Conversely, the idea that learning to read is just like learning to speak is accepted by no responsible linguist, psychologist, or cognitive scientist in the research community (Liberman & Liberman, 1990), (Stanovich, 1994)

2004 The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research, McCardle and Chhabra

'An extraordinary collection by the finest educational and neurological researchers... this book will surely become required reading for any and all who claim to care about the quality of reading instruction in America." J. Thomas Viall, Executive Director, The International Dyslexia Association.

Findings: 'Reading research has followed real children, in real classrooms, for long periods of time. It has employed strong and rigorous research methods from a variety of disciplines, has contributed to the development of assessment strategies to identify children at risk for reading failure, and has evaluated the effectiveness of different types of instructional interventions with children who have difficulty learning to read. Teachers should not be asked to change their classroom practice based on a single study or a good idea that has not been thoroughly and rigorously tested. There is now such converging evidence for early reading instruction. The Voice of Evidence in Reading Research is outstanding and just what the field needs. It should

be required reading in every School of Education.' Benita Blackmann, Ph.D., Trustee Professor of Education and Psychology, Syracuse University

2009 Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How We Read, Stanislas Dehaene

The act of reading is so easily taken for granted that we forget what an astounding feat it is. How can a few black marks on white paper evoke an entire universe of meanings? This riveting investigation explores every aspect of this human invention, from its origins to its neural underpinnings. A world authority on the subject, Dehaene reveals the hidden logic of spelling, describes pioneering research on how we process languages, and takes us into a new appreciation of the brain and its wondrous capacity to adapt.

Findings: The dispute between advocates of whole-language learning and the proponents of phonics instruction has plagued schools and education policy makers around the world for at least the last fifty years. The whole language approach has today been officially abandoned. Nonetheless, I suspect that the issue is still alive in many a teacher's mind because whole language advocates are still firmly entrenched in their position. They are convinced that their approach is best suited to children's needs.

In France as well as in the United States, efforts to reconcile the two camps have led to the adoption of an unhealthy compromise called 'mixed' or 'balanced reading' instruction. The punch line is quite simple: We know that conversion of letters into sounds is the key state in reading acquisition. All teaching efforts should be initially focused on a single goal, the grasp of the alphabetic principle whereby each letter or grapheme represents a phoneme.

2015 Stanford study on brain waves shows how different teaching methods affect reading development, Professor Bruce McCandliss

Findings: beginning readers who focus on letter-sound relationships, or phonics, increase activity in the area of their brains best wired for reading.

<http://www.nrrf.org/stanford-study-on-brain-waves-shows-how-different-teaching-methods-affect-reading-development/>