Closing Knowledge Gaps to Bridge the Instructional Divide

Why do the "reading wars" persist? For those, like me, who believe that evidence-based literacy instruction is settled science, this is hard to understand. No one who has been enlightened on this subject will disagree that explicit phonics instruction is crucial. First, it is critical for children’s reading comprehension because there is overwhelming evidence that phonics instruction improves reading (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018). Second, what is the evidence for reading instruction beyond phonics that addresses fluent word recognition and comprehension?

We recommend reading this comprehensive review in its entirety, especially the comprehensive evidence review. In an alphabetic writing system like English, each word is decoded to sound, translated to speech, and attached meaning. Our colleagues at the National Reading Panel’s (2000) five recommendations include "phonemic awareness and phonics instruction work? Second, what is the evidence for re..." (Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018). Beyond these essential components, our model includes a unified cognitive model. Instead, it is the orchestrated product of a set of linguistic and cognitive processes operating on text and interacting with background knowledge, features of the text, and the purpose and goals of the reading situation."

Cracking the Alphabetic Code: The Writing System Matters

Babies are born with brains biologically hardwired for listening and speaking. Fast and early gains in these oral language skills during the first year of life predict more efficient word reading, however, a more difficult challenge—mapping sound to meaning to abstract symbols. In alphabetic writing systems, such as English, phonemes (sounds) are represented by letter or groups of letters (graphemes). This visual-sound correspondence—the alphabet principle—can then be used to create, translate to spoken language, and attach meaning. Not surprisingly, the desire to read is linked to the ability to do so. Willingham suggests these strategies for motivating readers. Maximum the value of reading by giving them choices. Make the choice of reading easy, so students want to do it more than other activities. Make reading materials highly visible everywhere!

Learning to Comprehend Text is Complex and Multifaceted

Comprehension is far more than understanding individual words. It is the product of separate and interacting processes. Few children independently understand that letters represent sounds. Most require explicit instruction and experience. Executive functions, such as working memory, can also impact comprehension. Theories of how reading works? Theories have evolved from a unified cognitive model. Instead, it is the orchestrated product of a set of linguistic and cognitive processes operating on text and interacting with background knowledge, features of the text, and the purpose and goals of the reading situation."

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Comprehensive Evidence-based Literacy Instruction

Comprehensive evidence-based literacy instruction is settled science, it’s hard to understand any resistance. So we were delighted when our colleague Nadia Castles shared the article "Ending the Reading Wars: Reading Acquisition from Novice to Expert" by Castles, Rastle, and Nation. (2018) doi:10.1177/1529100618772271

Comprehension: Knowledge to Practice COMING THIS SUMMER

Margie高铁 and Nancy Elementary School have a hard work on the fourth book in one Knowledge to Practice series, Comprehension: Knowledge to Practice. With Reading Acquisition from Novice to Expert, a new book, the series provides teachers with a wide range of strategies to enhance reading comprehension, listening and speaking; vocabulary, and the...