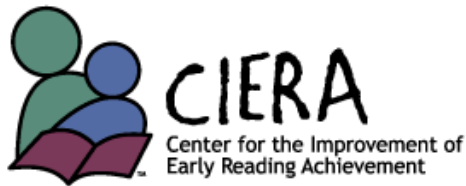


Phonics They *Really* Use

Phonics in a Balanced Reading Program

Steven A. Stahl

University of Georgia



National Reading Panel: Phonics Findings

- Overall, phonics instruction had a significant effect on reading achievement.
- Most (2/3) of the effect sizes involved measures of decoding or word recognition
- Effects were significant, but smaller, on measures of comprehension and oral reading

National Reading Panel: Phonics Findings

- The effects of different types of phonics programs (synthetic phonics, programs which emphasized phonograms, miscellaneous) did not differ from each other.
- This suggests that there is no one right method of teaching phonics, but that many methods of teaching children to decode are effective.

National Reading Panel: Phonics Findings

- Phonics instruction is more effective in kindergarten and first grade than in grades 2-6.
- Phonics instruction meets a developmental need.

National Reading Panel: Phonics Findings

- Phonological awareness instruction is effective in kindergarten and first grade.
- Phonological awareness instruction is especially effective when combined with letter training and as part of a total literacy program

National Reading Panel: Phonics Findings

- Phonics instruction can be effective for children with reading problems, but it is most effective in the early grades.
- Phonics instruction did not significantly effect the reading of older children with reading problems, who may not have needed this instruction.

What the report does not say

- It does not support any particular phonics program.
- It does not talk about “decodable text.”
- It does not support intensive phonics instruction.
- It does not talk about the content of a phonics program.

It does not talk about the role of
phonics in a total reading
program.



What do we want readers to be
able to do?

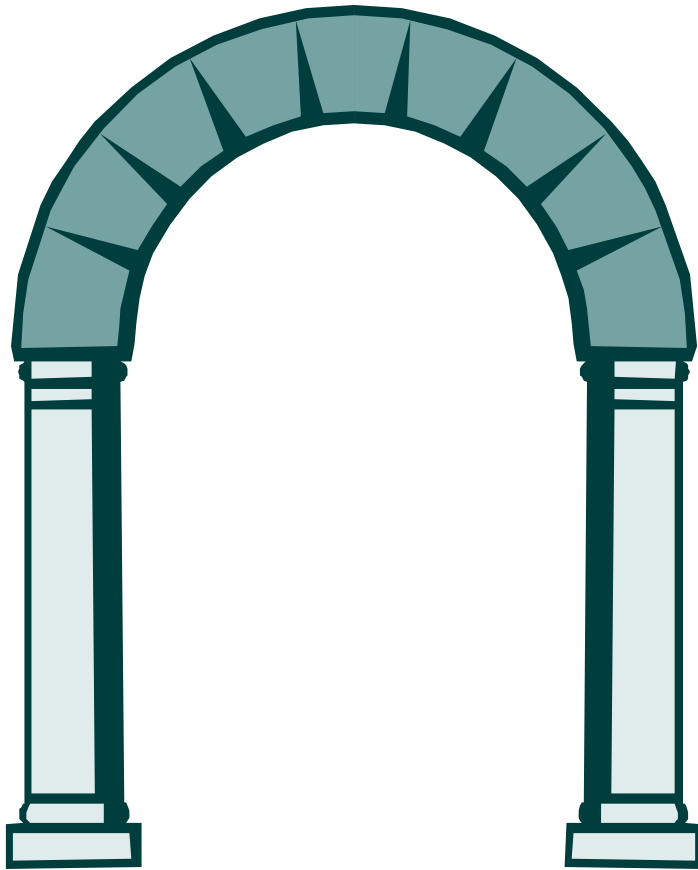
What do we want readers to be able to do?

- Enjoy and Appreciate Reading Literature and Non-fiction
- Comprehend and Learn from Text
- Recognize Words Automatically

These 3 goals are related...

- If children do not recognize words automatically, they cannot comprehend text effectively.
- If children do not comprehend text effectively, they will not want to read.

Children need to be able to decode in order to recognize words automatically.



- Reading instruction is like an arch. If any stone is missing, the arch will fall.
- For many children, phonics instruction is needed for them to be effective readers.

Components of a Reading /Language Arts Program

- Reading of Connected Text
 - Guided Reading
 - Re-reading of Familiar Text for Fluency
- Free Reading
- Teacher Reading to Children
- Writing and Spelling
- Phonics and other Skill Instruction

We do not teach phonics so
children can sound words out.

We teach phonics so children can recognize words automatically.

If they cannot recognize words,
they also need a strategy.

What strategies are helpful?

Pronounce this word (to yourself).

Minatory

What strategies did we use?

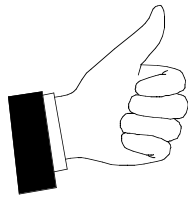
- Sounding out?
- Phonics rules?
- Use of analogies?
- Chunking?

**Good phonics instruction
should not teach rules, need not
use worksheets, should not
dominate instruction, and does
not have to be boring.**

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tīe

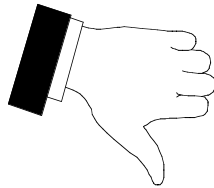
Phonics Rules



bead

bone

cat



does

love

scold

- When two vowels go walking... 45%
- Silent “e” rule.... 63%
- When a vowel is in the middle of a one-syllable word, it is short.... 60%

There is some evidence that children need to learn individual sound-symbol correspondences before learning to chunk

- Ehri and Robbins found that phonogram-based strategies worked best with children who already knew some sound-symbol correspondences
- Juel and Minden-Cupp (CIERA) found that the most effective teacher taught letter-sound relationships before using phonograms

Synthetic Phonics Approaches

- Begin with individual letters and sounds and blend to make words
- Often do not incorporate authentic texts
- “Traditional” phonics
- Orton-Gillingham
- Open Court
- Reading Mastery
- Saxon Phonics

sh

i	sh
---	----

f	i	sh
---	---	----

path

shin

math

dash

with

fish

ship

thin

rash

thick

Practice words in texts

Fish Dish

“I wish, wish, wish
For a dish,” said the fish,
“With a yam, yam, yam,
And a little bit of jam,
And I want thin ham
With that yam!” said the fish.

Constructivist Approaches to Phonics

- Spelling-based approaches
 - Word Study
 - Making words
- Phonogram-based approaches
 - Compare/Contrast
 - Benchmark School Approach

Word Sorts

- Closed Sorts
 - Give students lists of words which have multiple common features
 - You provide the category
 - Students classify words into groups
- Open Sorts
 - Give students lists of words which have multiple common features
 - Students make up categories
 - Must justify categories
 - Works well in groups

With
that
sham

shin
wash
pith

thin
rash
path

thick
ship
math

Sh

th

e i n t r w

e i n t r w

- in
- win
- new
- ten / net
- tin
- twin
- went
- rent
- wine
- wire
- write
- twine

MAKING WORDS

- Scaffolding
 - Try to change only one letter at a time
 - Constantly doing a verbal think-aloud
- Be conscious of making children think about word patterns
 - Do not stay on one word family
- Putting it together
 - Make sure you go back and re-read the words
 - Make sure you sort the words

w i th
sh

d

p

m

r

b

a

Compare / Contrast

- black
- hold
- kind
- play
- rain
- run

- pain old
- fun day
- blind mind
- crack fold
- lack runt
- pain smack
- stack main

- Sunday

Compare / Contrast

Who has the word age?

Right.

She puts this word card on the chart.

Look, Christina found the word age in her word.

If this is age, then this is sage.

Does that one have an a in it? This word is age.

Look, Dustin. This one is sage, so this one is /r/ /age/.

Rage.

List of 37 Common Phonograms,
From Wylie and Durrell, 1970

-ack	-ain	-ake	-ale
-all	-ame	-an	-ank
-ap	-ash	-at	-ate
-aw	-ay	-eat	-ell
-est	-ice	-ick	-ide
-ight	-ill	-in	-ine
-ing	-ink	-ip	-it
-ock	-oke	-op	-ot
-ore	-uck	-ug	-ump -unk

It is not a question of which
approach do I use

You need to use a multiplicity of
approaches to teach flexible
decoding skills.

Children who have only one approach tend to be weaker overall than children with flexible approaches

Phonics Study

- All schools have between 60% and 70% free and reduced lunch
- All schools are multi-ethnic
- All schools located in rural communities in Georgia

Georgia's *Reading First* Program

- State grant program
- Increase amount of reading instruction to 3 hours
- In the beginning, required one hour of literature, one hour of content reading, and one hour of phonics instruction
- Phonics approaches allowed initially: Saxon Phonics, Open Court, Reading Mastery, Sing-Spell-Read-Write

School A

- Used a traditional phonics approach as an “add-on” to a conventional basal reading program
- Had daily work with traditional phonics instruction and a daily directed reading activity
- Used “Four Blocks” approach, including FROG for small group work with struggling readers

School B

- Had a tradition of whole language instruction
- More extensive writing work than other schools
- Used “Small books” for daily reading. Children read in pairs or alone.
- Used a phonogram-based phonics approach, including a word wall
- Used a “Four Blocks” approach including FROG

School C

- Embraced a strong synthetic phonics program. Was one of the first Reading First sites.
- Some round-robin reading using class sets of books, including an old basal. Large emphasis on decoding, even in the context of reading connected text
- Used parallel-block scheduling

Results (tentative)

- Overall, all classes had overall average reading scores on Basic Reading Inventory
- On BRI, School A produced highest gains in achievement.
- School A students also had highest gains on measures of decoding monosyllabic and polysyllabic words

Results (tentative)

- School B had highest gains on a measure of developmental spelling
- School B also highest gains on a measure of meta-cognitive awareness of decoding
- School C had the highest absolute scores, since children started off highest, probably reflecting a strong academic kindergarten.

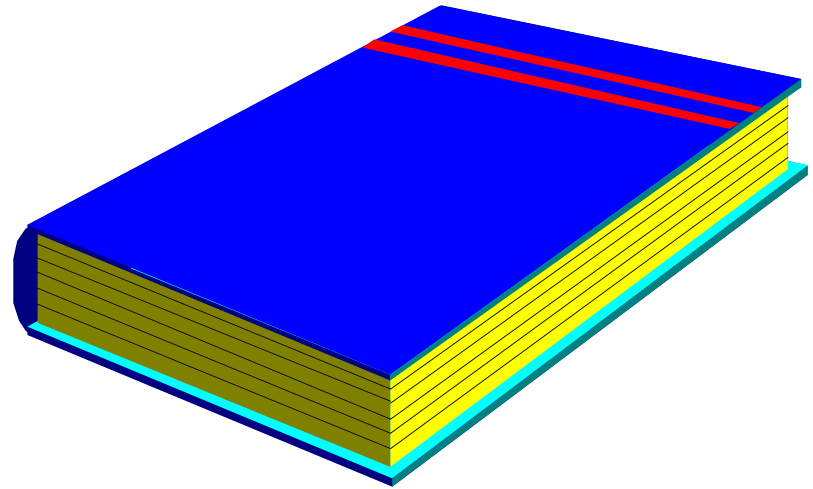
Principles of Practice

- Practice should be focused. It should be sufficient for children to learn what is being taught.
- Practice should extend to reading and writing of texts.
- Practice should be cumulative and varied.
- Practice should lead to automaticity.

The most important practice we do involves applying phonics in connected text.

What kinds of text?

- Instructional level text
- Authentic text
- Predictable text
- Decodable text



Instructional level text

- Should be text that child can read with some support
- Needed to practice integration of all reading skills
- Needed to develop comprehension abilities

Authentic Text

- Needed to develop higher level concepts and vocabulary
- Needed to develop children's interest in reading
- Should be relatively difficult
- Might be read aloud to class or read with support by students

Predictable Text

- Used to develop print concept and “booksuccess”.
- Used to develop fingerpointing and print-speech match.
- Might be read using Shared Reading model.
- Should be phased out by middle of first grade.

Decodable Text

- Should contain a reasonable percentage of words with a taught pattern
- Used for practice of decoding in context
- The best texts tell a story that is comprehensible; the worst texts make little or no sense
- Should be practiced by children, possibly with repeated reading.

**Good phonics instruction
should form a bridge between
the phonics instruction and
reading text.**

Scaffolding for Word Recognition

Teachers coach to provide instruction in word recognition by asking questions such as, "What can you do to figure out that word?"

- "Do you see a chunk (or phonogram) you recognize?"
- "Does it look like any other words you know?"
- "Can you sound it out?"
- "What does the first letter say? What does the next letter say? Etc. Now blend the sounds together."
- "Does that word look right for what is on the page?"
- "Does it make sense in the story?"

Scaffolding for Word Recognition

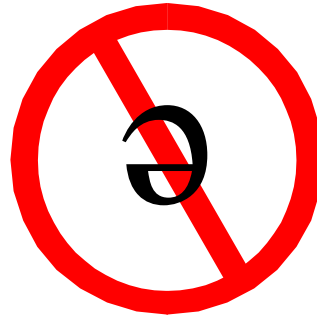
Other strategies to figure out words or ask them to explain what they did to figure out a word.

- "I like how you corrected that."
- "Good checking!"
- "How did you know it couldn't be...?"
- "What did you do to figure that word out?"

Word recognition coaching prompts are hints or questions that get children to engage in self-monitoring strategies as well as a variety of word recognition strategies to use with words not known instantly.

From Barbara Taylor, P. David Pearson, et al. (1999)

Be wary of excessive phonics instruction!

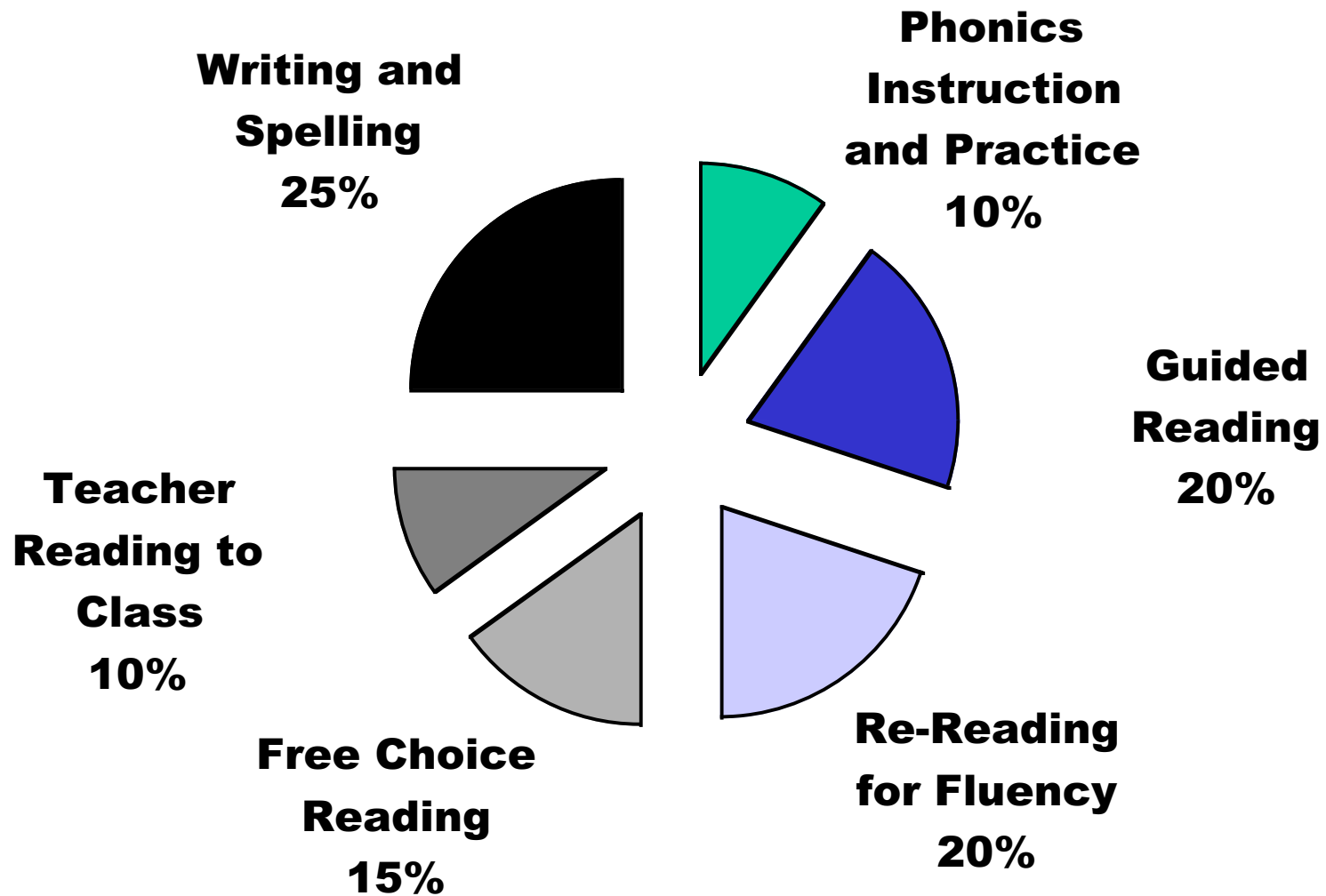


- An hour a day or more on phonics alone.
- Focus on rules and terminology.
- Focus on isolated words.
- No extension into connected text, or use of highly contrived text.

Good Phonics Instruction is a
part of reading instruction.

It is an important part, but just a part.

Proportions of Time in Reading /Language Arts



“My belief that the choice of beginning reading method is important does not lessen in any way my conviction about the importance of good teaching....

A poor method in the hands of a good teacher produces better results than a good method in the hands of a poor teacher.

Good teaching is always needed. But a good method in the hands of a good teacher -- that is ideal.”

Jeanne S. Chall

Learning to Read: The Great Debate