

Children achieving: Research- based principles and practices in early literacy

Common myths: Scientific realities

What do we mean by achieving?

- The fallacy of grade level
- The artificiality of reading scores
- The ability to successfully read for literary meaning, for information, for specific purposes

Examples

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Reading Report Card)
 - “There is a saying, “Don’t get mad, get even.”
How does this apply to the story?”

Examples

- When turtle remains quiet about his mistreatment by Spider, the author wants you to:
 - A. Believe Turtle is afraid
 - B. Have sympathy for Turtle
 - C. Feel dislike for Turtle
 - D. Think Turtle deserved no dinner

What do we mean by research?

- Must be empirical (systematic)
- Should conform to carefully developed procedures
- Should avoid ‘extraneous variables’
- May be qualitative or quantitative

What counts as research

- Quantitative research examines questions of whether or not a particular method is effective or not
- Qualitative research examines under what conditions these approaches are most effective
- Replication is a necessary ingredient of good research

Watch out for:

- Claims that ‘research says’ without appropriate citations in peer reviewed journals
- Claims without appropriate control groups
- Claims that are based on small sized groups or samples
- Claims that do not stand the test of time

What are those claims?

Common Myths: Scientific Realities

Myth: Learning must be developmentally appropriate

- Abuses:
 - Research indicates that it means many things to different programs
 - It is often interpreted as “laissez-faire”
 - Emphasis on social-emotional development, viewing cognitive development as ‘academic learning’

Myth: Learning must be developmentally appropriate

- Reality: Learning can “push” development
- Example: Prekindergarten Guidelines
 - Content-rich
 - Language-rich
 - Intentional and interactive

Features of Quality Instruction

- Time on task
- Intellectually engaging curriculum
- High levels of teacher interaction optimize children's learning
- Clear, systematic, scaffolded instruction

Features of Quality Instruction

- Oral language and vocabulary development
 - receptive language and expressive language
- Phonological development
- Letter name knowledge

Features of Quality Instruction



Features of Quality Instruction



Features of Quality Instruction



Myth: Learning to read and write is as natural as learning to speak

- Abuses
 - Over-emphasis on environmental factors to teach reading
 - Reading is learned through imitation
 - Reading is learned by trying to reproduce the environment in middle- and upper-income homes

Myth: Learning to read and write is as natural as learning to speak

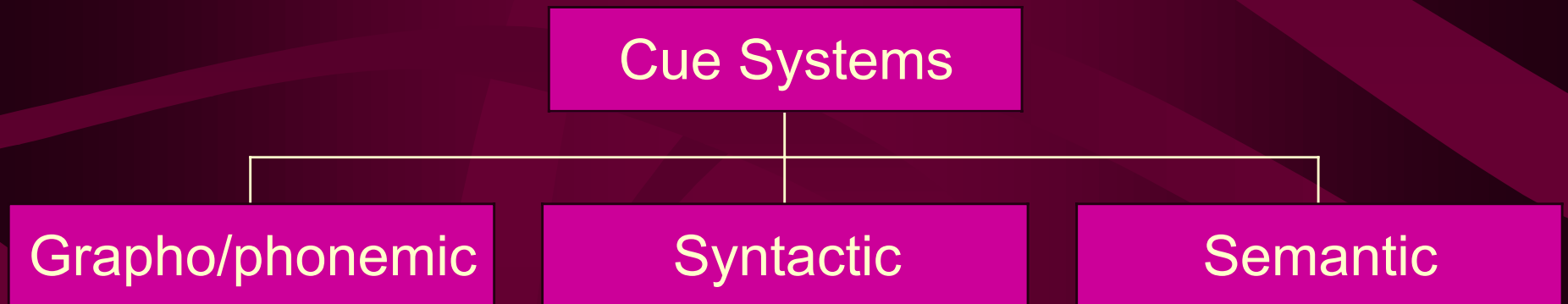
- Reality: Learning to read is hard work and requires high-quality teaching
 - Highly predictive of success in reading
 - Oral language and vocabulary development
 - (TEKS 2,3,4,8,11,12)
 - Phonological awareness
 - [TEKS 6,7]
 - Letter name knowledge
 - [TEKS 7]

Myth: Good readers rely on context when they read

Abuses

- Reading is a ‘psycholinguistic guessing game’
- All cue systems are as important as others at all age levels

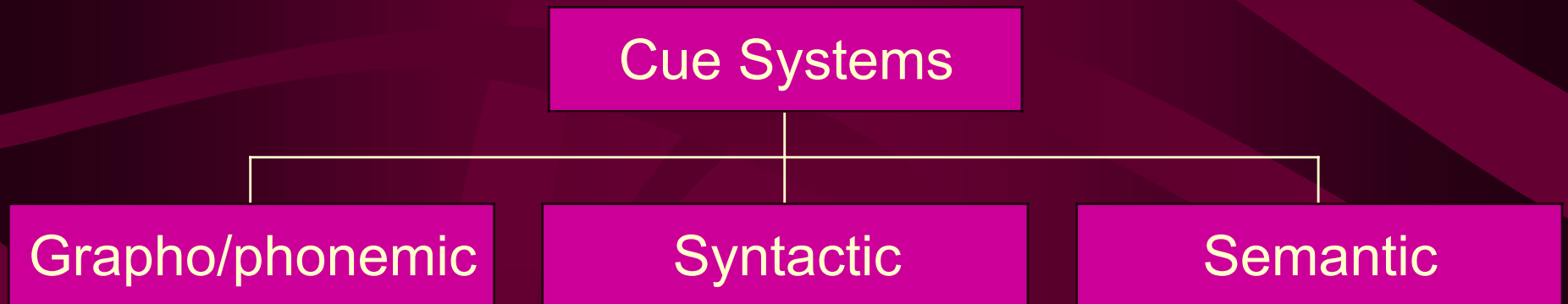
The Three Cue Systems



Myth: Good readers rely on context when they read

- Reality: Good readers generally read about every word correctly

The Three Cue Systems



Myth: Wide reading improves reading ability

- Abuses
 - Too much time devoted to sustained silent reading
 - Books read may not be tailored to children's reading level
 - Children may be reluctant to chose challenging materials

Myth: Wide reading will improve reading ability: The bootstrap theory

- Reality: Reading challenging materials with adult support improves reading ability
 - Center for Family Literacy promotes reading to children
 - Reading to parents promotes reading ability
 - Reading interactively improves reading ability

Myth: Children's learning develops from "learning to read" to "reading to learn"

- Abuses
 - Reading might be viewed as a linear process, moving from an emphasis on skills to application
 - Essential skills of vocabulary, and background concepts may be ignored

Myth: Children's learning develops from "learning to read" to "reading to learn"

- Reality: Comprehension should be at the heart of learning to read from the very beginning
 - [TEKS 8,9,10,11,12,13,15,16]
 - Readings and retellings
 - Writing from personal perspective
 - Connecting what children already know to what they are learning and can envision for the future

A model of instruction: Texas style

- Instruction should have coherence and depth
- Learning requires children's minds to be active
- High levels of teacher interaction optimize children's learning
- Children thrive in classrooms when they are challenged and achieve developing competence