

**Summary of Early Reading Recommendations in National Research Syntheses**  
**P. David Pearson, Michigan State University**

Source-> • •Issue/Feature •	Bond and Dykstra, First Grade Studies	Chall, Learning to Read: The Great Debate, 1967	Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, Becoming a Nation of Readers 1985	Adams, Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print, 1990	Snow and Burns, Preventing Reading Difficulties, 1998	National Reading Panel, 2000
<b>Methods preference</b>	Not explicitly mentioned BUT lots of evidence for code advantages AND Virtual all methods were superior to the Look-Say basal.	Code over meaning in grades 1 and 2, BUT... •Good teaching still needed •Does not apply to all pupils or schools (believe the data) •Will not cure all our ills	Not explicitly mentioned, but balance of early phonics and lots of reading/writing is implied	Code with reading of meaningful connected text •Balance all over the place	Code, with reading of meaningful connected text and (by implication) decodable text.	Systematic Phonics
<b>How/when should phonics be taught</b>	Word study skills should be taught systematically	•No particular preference •First, fast, and out! •	No one approach singled out: •Should be well-designed and concentrated in Grades 1 and 2	• First grade conclusion: No consistent advantage for code over meaning, but non-basal is consistently superior to basal. • Linguistic good at word recognition but lacking in comprehension. • Later: Consistent advantage for code.	Code over meaning in grades 1 and 2, BUT... •Good teaching still needed •Does not apply to all pupils or schools (believe the data) •Will not cure all our ills	•Strongest effects are early on, in first grade, not much evidence for phonics beyond grade 2 •In conjunction with a rich curriculum. •No preference for analytic vs synthetic.
<b>Phonemic Awareness</b>	Not really dealt with, but phoneme discrimination was the #2 predictor.	Not explicitly dealt with except as a predictor of later achievement	Implicit in K and phonics recommendations	Teach, but in conjunction with l-s instruction	Teach, nurture, practice!!!	•Teach it explicitly for a total of 18 hours early on •With letter sound instruction •In small groups
<b>Preferred text for early readers</b>	• Lots more words lots faster; those programs that introduced a lot had better results. Better balance between HF and regular words.	•Loosen vocabulary control •Lots of folk/fairy tales •Re-evaluate grade levels	Interesting and comprehensible, with opportunity to apply phonics	Meaningful text supplemented by decodable text •Fairly easy to read	Seems to have been finessed in conclusions (lots of meaningful text), but some decodable text is implied.	•No evidence for the use of decodable text
<b>Instruction before “formal” reading</b>	Not much said.	Alphabet •Lots of language and meaning emphasis in K	•Letters and their sounds •reading •writing •oral language	•Read alouds!!! •Talk about text •Language experience •Phonemic awareness •Letter names •Print Awareness	Read alouds!!!! •Oral language •Phonological awareness •Print Awareness •Alphabetic Principle •Form/function relations	•Phonemic awareness works with students before kindergarten
<b>Role of writing in learning to read</b>	All for it. Note the advantage of ITA and LEA and phonic-linguistic	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Lots more needed •helps reading in many ways	•Very important, in its own right and to support phonemic awareness (inv spel), phonics, and text understanding	•Important in its own right and helps with phonemic awareness and phonics	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Invented spelling</b>	Note the ITA finding of greater # of words in writing sample	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Implied in writing recommendation	•Important means to discovering phonemic awareness and letter sound knowledge	•Highly encouraged (not in conflict with goal of correct spelling) as a means of nurturing phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Role of comprehension instruction</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Not too much to deal with in early readers •Very important later on	•More time to direct instruction in comprehension; •Discussion also important	Little is said, little is implied, but comprehension as a goal is central	•Important from the outset, but early on do it with read-aloud books •Emphasize conceptual knowledge	Essential, especially strategy instruction and vocabulary instruction

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<b>Reading to children</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Parents need to do it frequently	Parents and teachers should nurture active involvement	•Absolutely pivotal in Pre-K and K.	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Primary forms of practice</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Not a part of the scope of inquiry, but basal workbooks are criticized	Less time in workbooks, more time reading and writing	Read a lot Workbooks OK if well-designed with clear purpose	•Daily practice with easy texts plus some exposure to challenging texts	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Just plain reading</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Dramatic increases needed •Schools need better libraries	•Very important, including independent reading, practice reading (e.g., repeated reading, pairs, etc)	•Critical! both easy reading to consolidate skills and challenging reading to promote new learning	Concludes the evidence for using school time is inconclusive
<b>Teacher education</b>	Pointed to as the most likely path to improved student learning	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Five years of preparation and lots more content •	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•LOTS of knowledge-based requirements for pre-service	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Professional Development</b>	Implied but not specified	Yes, with an emphasis on program specific venturesuuuu	Focus on better induction programs	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Local programs and life-long support for personal professional development	Professional development for teaching reading comprehension works
<b>Assessments</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Important because they can give teachers more freedom in using methods and materials (outcome accountability •Single component tests (alphabetic principle, comprehension, critical reading, appreciation) •Absolute, not relative, standards for cross-time comparisons	More comprehensive assessments needed •Fluency •Summarize and evaluate text •Amount of reading and writing	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Need to conduct a lot of validity research on current tools.	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Special interventions for kids at risk</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Essential problems lie in code-knowledge, not comprehension •Best remedial strategies are code-based with decodable text.	Not addressed, except in Jeanne Chall's afterword.	RR mentioned but topic not highlighted	•High on those that use highly trained professional tutors. •Limited role for volunteers (read to, talk to) •Effective elements: Same as for garden-variety readers	Not a part of the scope of inquiry
<b>Home literacy practices</b>	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	Not a part of the scope of inquiry	•Read aloud and discuss stories •Informal letter and word learning	No explicit recommendations, but lots of reading aloud and language play is implied	•Read alouds •Language activities	Not a part of the scope of inquiry