
Bringing EFL reading instruction up to date

Webinar handout

By Robin Skipsey

Overview

This document lists a selection of the research and articles that informed my webinar presentation.

Common misconceptions about teaching reading

1. Speed reading

Speed reading courses continue to be popular, although researchers such as Mark Seidenberg have debunked many of their claims.

An extract from the book “Language at the speed of sight” which looks at the fraudulent claims behind speed-reading programmes.

<https://www.wired.com/2017/01/make-resolution-read-speed-reading-wont-help/>

2. The “psycholinguistic guessing game” and the three-cueing system

Many reading programmes designed since the 1970s rely on theories developed by Kenneth Goodman, an influential reading researcher and academic. These articles describe the theories and the evidence against them.

1. Profile of Kenneth Goodman

<https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/kenneth-s-goodman-founding-father-of-whole-language-dead-at-92/2020/05>

2. A description of current understanding of the role of context cues on skilled reading

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/use-context-cues-reading>

Some key areas for reading instruction

1. Phonology, spelling and reading

Research and articles about the importance of phonology and spelling in the learning of reading.

- **For first language readers**

1. Learning to Read and Spell Words
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1080/10862968709547585>
2. The science of word recognition
<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/typography/develop/word-recognition>
3. An explanation of the “reading rope”
<https://www.spelfabet.com.au/2013/04/the-reading-rope/>
4. Ending the reading wars: Reading Acquisition From Novice to Expert
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1529100618772271>

- **For second-language readers**

1. Phonology in Second Language Reading: Not an Optional Extra
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262377682_Phonology_in_Second_Language_Reading_Not_an_Optional_Extra
2. EFL reading in context
<https://alt-publications.org/articles/26004-efl-reading-context>

2. Teacher resources for spelling patterns

1. Charts of most of the regular spelling patterns in English can be a very helpful reference when teaching reading and spelling. This site has a range of free resources.
<https://alphabeticcodecharts.com/free-code-charts/>
2. A searchable list of words by spelling, provided by Australian speech pathologist Alison Clarke:
<https://www.spelfabet.com.au/spelling-lists/sorted-by-spelling/>

3. The role of background knowledge

Background knowledge plays a key role in reading comprehension – for example it is crucial for inferencing.

1. A guide to why and how background knowledge helps, written by cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham (How knowledge helps)
<https://www.aft.org/periodical/american-educator/spring-2006/how-knowledge-helps>
2. A description of “The baseball study” – a famous study into the role of background knowledge in reading
<https://www.coreknowledge.org/blog/baseball-experiment-two-wisconsin-researchers-discovered-comprehension-gap-knowledge-gap/>

A recording of Robin Skipsey’s webinar can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/supporting-literacy-development-mini-event>