Ten Maxims: What We've Learned So Far About How Children Learn To Read
by Reid Lyon (May 2023)

RESEARCH SUPPORT:

1. Almost all children learn to speak naturally; reading and writing must be taught.
2. Literacy begins at birth. It is rooted in early social interactions and experiences that include regular exposure to oral language and print. Strong roots tend to produce strong readers.


King, R., & Torgesen, J. (2006). Improving the effectiveness of reading instruction in one elementary school: A description of the process. In P. Blaunstein & R. Lyon (Eds.), It doesn’t have to be this way. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.


RESEARCH SUPPORT:

3. All good readers are good decoders. Decoding should be taught until children can accurately and independently read new words. Decoding depends on phonemic awareness: a child’s ability to identify individual speech sounds. Decoding is the on-ramp for word recognition.


RESEARCH SUPPORT:

4. Fluent readers can instantly and accurately recognize most words in a text. They can read with expression at an appropriate rate for their age. Reading fluency requires comprehension AND it supports comprehension.


Walczyk, J. J., & Griffith-Ross, D. A. (2007). How important is reading skill fluency for comprehension?. The Reading Teacher, 60(6), 560-569.

**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

5. Comprehension--the goal of reading--draws on multiple skills and strengths, including a solid foundation of vocabulary and background knowledge.


RESEARCH SUPPORT:
6. One size does not fit all: use data to differentiate your instruction.


Research-based education and intervention: What we need to know, 21–43. Baltimore: International Dyslexia Asso


Kuhn, M. R. (2020). Whole class or small group fluency instruction: A tutorial of four effective approaches. Education Sciences, 10(5), 145.


**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

7. Direct, systematic instruction helps students develop the skills they need to become strong readers. Indirect, three-cueing instruction is unpredictable in its impact on word reading and leaves too much to chance.


Rasinski, T., Samules, S.J., Hiebert, E., Petscher, Y., & Feller, K. (2011). The relationship between a silent reading fluency instructional protocol on students’ reading comprehension and achievement in an urban school setting. Reading Psychology, 32, 75-


Rosenthal R. How are we doing in soft psychology? American Psychologist, 45(6), 775-777.


RESEARCH SUPPORT

8. These maxims apply to English Learners/Emergent Bilinguals, who often need extra support to bolster their oral language as they learn to read and write in a new language.


**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

9. We should support students who speak languages or dialects other than General American English at home, by honoring their home language and by giving them expanded opportunities to engage with General American English text.


**RESEARCH SUPPORT**

10. *To become good readers and writers, students need to integrate many skills that are built over time.*


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