

Practices to Accelerate Student Reading - The What and The Why

- 1. Teach the sound first, instead of teaching the letter name first.**
 - a. We access the sound to read, not the name of the letter.
 - i. You can be an excellent reader and not know any consonant letter names.
 - b. Every consonant letter name is at least 2 sounds.
 - i. 'b' = /b/ /ee/
 - ii. 'c' = /s/ /ee/
 - iii. 'f' = /e/ /f/
 - iv. 'h' = /ay/ /ch/
 - v. 'w' = /d/ /u/ /b/ /l/ /y/ /oo/
- 2. Look at the text, not the pictures, to read the words.**
 - a. Looking at pictures when reading takes focus away from the words and almost always leads to guessing/misreading the words.
 - b. Reading is talk written down. The person who wrote the text is communicating with the person who is reading it.
 - c. Text for 3rd grade and older rarely has pictures in it.
- 3. Read all the sounds in the word, left to right. Do not just read the first sound.**
 - a. ALL sounds in a word are important, not just the first sound.
 - b. Many students have received the implication – or are explicitly taught – that the first letter is somehow the only one that really matters.
 - c. This often leads to them guessing the word, inserting a word that starts with that letter but isn't the word that is written.
- 4. Sound out unfamiliar words; don't guess or memorize.**
 - a. Rarely is the guessed word the word that is written on the page.
 - b. Misreading words leads to poor comprehension.
 - c. As children move up in grades, there are more words in their reading vocabulary.
 - i. By about 3rd grade, their memory is saturated and their misreading of words increases dramatically.
 - ii. Because of this, struggling readers past 3rd grade and into adulthood are typically reading at about a 3rd grade level.
- 5. Students should track under the words smoothly with their finger rather than tapping.**
 - a. Finger gliding under words when reading increases fluency/reading speed.
 - b. Tapping under each word slows down fluency/reading speed.
- 6. Teach tendencies or patterns instead of rules.**
 - a. There are many tendencies in the syllable and sound/spelling patterns in words.
 - i. Some tendencies happen more frequently than others.
 - ii. None of the tendencies happen all the time.
 - b. Teaching rules takes significant instructional time.
 - c. Learning and integrating rules requires a huge amount of memory and brain work.
 - d. Many students are confused by inconsistent rules.



- 7. Interleave (mix, alternate between) instruction as opposed to teaching to mastery.**
 - a. Teaching several skills and concepts is preferable to focusing just on one and teaching it to mastery and moving on to something else.
 - b. Teaching explicitly and reviewing and revisiting the skills, concepts, and information previously taught will better lead to mastery over time.
 - c. “It is more effective to distribute practice across different skills than polish each one in turn.”
“Interleaving and variation help learners reach beyond memorization to higher levels of conceptual learning and application.”
make it stick: The Science of Successful Learning, pg. 65
- 8. Scaffold writing instruction and correct misspelled words in writing.**
 - a. Practicing doing something incorrectly and repeatedly (misspelling), without feedback on how to fix it, results in getting very good at doing it incorrectly.
 - i. It is much more challenging to teach a child to spell correctly once they have repeatedly misspelled words without correction than it is to teach them in the first place.
 - b. “When learners commit errors and are given corrective feedback, the errors are not learned.” *make it stick: The Science of Successful Learning, pg. 90*
 - i. Meaning: When a child misspells words, show them the correction so they can then spell the words correctly.
- 9. Teach the correct way to form letters and correct errors in handwriting.**
 - a. Learning correct handwriting (top to bottom, left to right) can enhance learning of spelling, vocabulary, and composition skills.
 - b. Handwriting production with verbal prompts (not tracing!) will improve attention, motor skills, muscle memory, and handwriting fluency.
 - c. With EBLI, we use the [Peterson Handwriting](#) prompts.
- 10. Teach the code, as well as blending and segmenting, within the context of words (not in isolation).**
 - a. Instruction moves faster.
 - b. When instruction is within words and moves to reading in text and writing, students understand why they are learning what you are teaching them.
 - c. Using words instead of teaching sounds and spellings in isolation makes the instruction meaningful and relevant.
- 11. Teach speech to print.**
 - a. It is more effective and efficient.
 - b. It is reversible, working well for both reading and spelling.
- 12. Read out loud to students, using a novel that is above the ability level of your highest reader.**
 - a. This is important for all students but even more so for emerging and struggling readers.
 - b. This provides all students with exposure to background knowledge, higher level vocabulary, and the sequence and flow of a story.

