

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The New Educator

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Professional Development
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Teaching Children to Read

By Bernadette Alonso, National Board Certified Teacher

How do we teach children to read? Does it happen automatically? The National Reading Panel researched reading instruction and identified methods to achieve reading success known as "The Big Five." The five areas of reading instruction include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension.

Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about and work with individual sounds. The focus is on the "sound" of letters used to form words. Before phonics can be taught, children must be able to hear and manipulate oral sound patterns so that they may relate them to print. Without phonemic awareness, children will experience difficulty with basic decoding skills. Studies show that an absence of phonemic awareness is a characteristic of children not succeeding in school or failing to learn how to read. This concept bridges the critical gap in literacy preparation and success in beginning to read. Phonemic awareness is oral instruction with sounds incorporated in meaningful, interactive games and activities. Exposure and experience are key to mastery! Strategies to promote phonemic awareness include:

- Rhymes, poems, songs
- Syllable counting
- Sounds within a word/blending sounds
- Sequencing of sounds
- Manipulation of sounds

Please see *Teaching Children to Read*
on page 2

Online Professional Development Menu Launched to Help Teachers

On October 1, 2005, the Office of Professional Development launched an online menu identifying professional development offerings for the 2005-2006 school year. Many courses are specifically designed for new teachers. For your convenience, we have listed courses available for new teachers during October and November on page 4 of this newsletter. The menu also provides scheduling information for monthly New Educator Support Team (NEST) sessions held at various locations throughout the district. New teachers interested in receiving mentoring and/or support should register to attend a NEST session. Teachers may register for courses and/or NEST sessions through the Online Calendar and Registration System at: <http://campus.dadeschools.net/>

New Teacher Helpline
305-995-7888

"Before phonics can be taught, children must be able to hear and manipulate oral sound patterns so that they may relate them to print. Without phonemic awareness, children will experience difficulty with basic decoding skills."

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Phonics

Phonics instruction teaches children the relationships between the letters of written language and the individual sounds of spoken language. The goal is to help children learn the alphabetic principle and teach patterns and relationships between letters. Children need direct instruction of specific letter-sound relationships. Through phonics instruction, students improve their reading comprehension because overall fluency and accuracy are enhanced. Phonics instruction must follow a logical sequence.

Strategies to promote phonics instruction include:

- Alphabet activities
- Vowel pattern instruction
- Pictionaries
- Make words
- Word families

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly. It allows students to understand what they are reading. Fluency is often a missing link between being able to “read” and comprehending what is being read. Research shows that for most children, reading the same text aloud four times with feedback on how to improve their reading will enhance fluency which in turn boosts comprehension. Fluency and comprehension are interconnected.

Strategies to promote fluency include:

- Teacher read alouds- modeling expression, rate (builds vocabulary)
- Student read alouds
- Echo/choral reading
- Recorded readings
- Buddy reading
- Reader’s theatre

Vocabulary

Vocabulary involves words we must know to communicate effectively. Vocabulary is important because beginning readers use their oral vocabulary to make sense of the words they see in print. Children must know what most of the words mean before they can understand what they are reading. Vocabulary can be learned indirectly or directly. Indirect learning may take place through conversation, read alouds and independent reading. Direct learning may occur through teaching the use of strategies, previewing vocabulary before reading a story and articulating new words with additional opportunities to use the words.

Strategies to expand vocabulary include:

- Read alouds
- Word webs
- Concentration
- Definitions
- Synonym/antonym activities

Text Comprehension

Comprehension provides the reason to read. Good readers have a purpose for reading and are actively thinking while reading. Comprehension strategies help students become better readers. Different strategies to gauge comprehension include using graphic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structure and summarizing. Research shows that direct instruction in text comprehension can help children understand and recall what they read and it enables them to communicate about what they have read.

Strategies to promote text comprehension include:

- Reciprocal reading
- Question/answer relationships
- C.R.I.S.S.
- Graphic organizers

The National Reading Panel has concluded that effective reading instruction must include direct and ongoing instruction in these five areas. Take the challenge to help all children learn how to read and achieve academic success!

“Research shows that direct instruction in text comprehension can help children understand and recall what they read and it enables them to communicate about what they have read.”



*Bernadette Alonso is a
National Board
Certified Teacher*

Effective Instructional Strategies

Tiger Woods wouldn't win many tournaments if he used a 5 iron for every shot. A successful golfer knows when to use the appropriate club. Similarly, effective teachers can select and use instructional strategies that move individual students closer to the goal of improved academic achievement.

Researchers have identified instructional strategies that show positive, measurable effects on student achievement. Scholars Robert Marzano, John Hattie and Harold Wenglinsky analyzed this research and identified strategies that can be categorized into two macrostrategies (metacognition and active student engagement) and three microstrategies (higher-order thinking, cooperative learning and independent practice).

Metacognition When students are taught to reflect on their own thinking, they gain knowledge and control of factors that affect learning--the self, the task at hand and strategies to be employed. From his analysis of 395 research studies, Marzano concludes that metacognitive thinking is the primary vehicle for student learning. Research strongly suggests persistent, positive effects regardless of student age, achievement level, nationality or ethnicity. Metacognitive skills transfer to other learning situations and are retained over time.

Despite this evidence, teaching strategies that incorporate metacognition are seldom applied in classroom practice. Marzano identifies three processes to teach metacognitive skills: providing students with specific learning objectives before each lesson, providing feedback on the processes and strategies students use and giving students time to consider how to approach a task, then reminding students to activate specific thinking behaviors.

Active student engagement Teachers that actively engage students apply hands-on lessons that require students to use multiple learning skills and higher-order thinking to construct meaning and knowledge. To be effective, activities must channel student thought and action to meet specific educational objectives. Strategies that help teachers actively engage students fall into three categories: higher-order thinking, cooperative learning and independent practice.

Higher-order thinking can be described as the ability to use information to solve problems, analyze arguments, negotiate issues or make predictions. It involves examining assumptions and values, evaluating evidence and assessing conclusions. Much normal thinking occurs in default patterns that are hazy, narrow and sprawling. To improve students' ability to think using higher-order skills, teachers must teach specific methods that combat these default patterns. Research suggests that higher-order thinking skills can lead to immediate and long-term improvements in achievement and can transfer to other disciplines.

Cooperative learning Studies on cooperative learning indicate a strong impact on student achievement as well as increased motivation and improved social interactions with adults and peers. To make the strategy most effective, teachers should group students heterogeneously and eliminate competition among groups.

Independent practice/homework Research shows the positive effects of homework can be greatly increased when assignments are dispensed regularly, not unduly lengthy, provide practice in skills and procedures targeted in recent instruction and elicit teacher feedback. Well-designed homework assignments can also promote active parent involvement.

View citation of the references used in this article:

<http://www.districtadministration.com/page.cfm?p=1249>

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What Students Say

High school students in a focus group mentioned the following when asked what motivates them to learn and participate in school:

- Good relationship with the teacher
- Clear expectations
- Hands-on activities
- Assignments related to real life

Source: Walsh & Sattes, 2000

Marzano's "Top 9" List

Research shows these instructional practices contribute to higher levels of student achievement:

1. Identifying similarities and differences
2. Summarizing and note taking
3. Reinforcing effort and providing recognition
4. Homework and practice
5. Nonlinguistic representations (e.g., mental images, graphs, acting out content)
6. Cooperative learning
7. Setting objectives and providing feedback
8. Generating and testing hypotheses
9. Activating prior knowledge (i.e., via questions, cues, advance organizers)

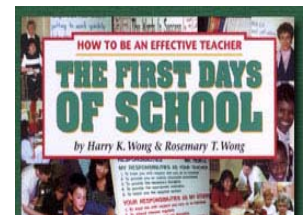
Source: Marzano, 2003

Announcing...Professional Development Courses for New Teachers Scheduled during October and November

<p>*Differentiated Instruction October 6, 20, & 27 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Teacher Education Center</p>	<p>Literacy Development for New Teachers October 29 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Teacher Education Center</p>
<p>*Positive Behavioral Supports for New Teachers October 6, 18, & 27 5:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Region III Conference Room</p>	<p>*Strategies for Diverse Populations November 3, 17, & December 1 5:30p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Teacher Education Center</p>
<p>*Data Driven Instruction for New Teachers October 11, 17, & 24 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Homestead Middle School (computers needed)</p>	<p>*Positive Behavioral Supports for New Teachers November 3, 17, & December 1 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Region III Conference Room</p>
<p>*Classroom Management for New Teachers October 17, 24, & November 22 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Dr. Edward L. Whigham Elementary</p>	<p>Literacy Development for New Teachers November 5 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Coral Park Elementary</p>
<p>*New Teacher Support: Beyond Being a Survivor October 18, 25, & November 1 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Miami Sunset Senior High</p>	<p>Differentiated Instruction for Student Success November 5 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Teacher Education Center</p>
<p>*PACES Domain I (Planning for Teaching and Learning) October 20 & 27 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Miami Palmetto Senior High</p>	<p>*Earth Science in the Secondary Classroom - Hands on November 8, 15, & 22 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Miami Sunset Senior High, Room 304</p>
<p>*Architecture of Accomplished Teaching October 20, 27, & November 3 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Miami Beach Senior High</p>	<p>*PACES Domain III (Teacher/Learner Relationships) November 15 & 22 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Joella Good Elementary</p>
<p>*PACES Domain II (Managing the Learning Environment) October 25 & November 1 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Joella Good Elementary</p>	<p>*Working with Families (Building Better Readers) November 15 & 22 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Teacher Education Center</p>
<p>Differentiated Instruction for Secondary Teachers October 29 8:30 - 3:30 p.m. Leisure City K-8 Center</p>	<p>Differentiated Instruction for Elementary Teachers November 19 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.</p>

Register for a course through the Online Calendar and Registration System
<http://campus.dadeschools.net/>

New Educator Support Team (NEST) Saturday Sessions, designed to provide mentoring and support, begin October 8, 2005. Sessions are facilitated by National Board Certified Teachers and are held at different locations. For information, call 305-995-7426. You can register for a session at:
<http://campus.dadeschools.net/>



A copy of The First Days of Schools by Dr. Harry and Rosemary K. Wong was sent to all new teachers. If you did not receive a copy, please email The Beginning Teacher Program at gkotrady@dadeschools.net

*Participants must attend all sessions in order to receive credit

Have A Question? We'll Answer

Livee Chandler, teacher at Norwood Elementary submitted the following question:

Q: Even though the September 2, deadline for submitting the application to request a mentor through the New Teacher Mentoring Program has passed, can new teachers still apply for mentoring?

A: Yes, you may apply for mentoring at anytime. All new teachers should have a mentor. If one has not been assigned to you, please call the New Teacher Helpline at 305-995-7888.

Questions regarding any aspect of teaching and learning can be emailed to the Beginning Teacher Program at: gkotrady@dadeschools.net
Please include your name and the name of the school where you teach.

