Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools

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*Dedicated to Michael H. Roe
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R eading instruction in most schools currently includes much use of authentic literature, more integration of instruction in the language arts and across the curriculum, more holistic instruction, more active involvement of students in learning activities, and more use of alternative assessment measures than was generally true in the past. There is also increased use of technology in reading instruction today within a rapidly evolving information age. This seventh edition of *Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools* addresses all of these movements, including new information on theory, research, and techniques while retaining solid, time-tested ideas and procedures—all within the familiar and practical framework of previous editions. We have included new concepts, materials, techniques, and positions and integrated them with valid traditional ideas in the balanced, even-handed way that has characterized our book from the start.

We hope to empower teachers to become decision makers, rather than merely followers of plans provided by others. Thus, we have offered information about many methods and materials for reading instruction, along with principles to help teachers choose among these options for their specific students and situations.

Audience and Purpose

Teaching Reading in Today's Elementary Schools is intended for use in introductory reading education courses for both preservice and inservice elementary school classroom teachers. It will also be beneficial in introductory courses for teachers preparing to become reading specialists, and it contains much information that will help administrators direct their schools' reading programs.

This book is designed to familiarize teachers with all the important aspects of elementary reading instruction. It presents much practical information about the process of teaching reading. Theoretical background and the research base behind suggestions have also been included to give the teacher or prospective teacher a balanced perspective.

The primary aim of the book is to prepare teachers to develop their students' abilities to read fluently and to foster their students' enjoyment of reading. The large amount of the school day spent on reading instruction in the primary grades makes this content especially important to the primary grade teacher. In the intermediate grades students must handle reading assignments in the content areas as well as in reading periods. Our book—particularly the chapters on content area reading and reading/study techniques—contains information that will help teachers implement reading instruction across the curriculum.

Revisions in This Edition

This edition represents a substantial revision. As always, the research base for understandings about reading instruction has been fully updated. A number of topics of recent concern, such as theoretical issues about developmentally appropriate practice and Vygotsky's theories about the zone of proximal development, Rosenblatt's reader-response theories, thematic teaching, technology uses in reading instruction, alternative assessment, family literacy, and a balanced approach to reading instruction, are given special attention in this edition.

Each chapter has undergone thorough revision. Chapter 1 has new information about motivation and emphasizes a balanced approach to reading instruction. Chapter 2 has information on developmentally appropriate practice and Vygotsky's theories. Chapter 3 now includes more information about phonemic awareness and onsets and rimes. Chapter 4 has additional information about analogies. Chapter 5 has new information on multiple intelligences, visual representations as postreading strategies, understanding characterization and themes in stories, Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction, and educational television. In Chapter 6 there is new information about the effectiveness of seven types of open-ended reading response formats, some new suggestions for critical reading instruction, and some new information on student-generated questions. Chapter 7 has added information about literature-based approaches and eclectic approaches, and there has been some reorganization of information, due primarily to the addition of Chapter 11, which covers many technology issues that were previously covered in this chapter in a condensed form. Chapter 8 has new material on double-entry journals and Rosenblatt's reader-response theory. In Chapter 9 the connection between libraries and research skills, including multimedia production, is made. Chapter 10 has been updated and tightened. Chapter 11 is a new chapter on the use of technology for literacy learning. It addresses the role of the teacher in the use of technology, technology as an instructional tool, and adjusting instruction through technology. Areas of technology covered include instructional transparencies, television programs, audiotapes, videotapes, CD-ROMs and videodiscs, computer applications, and multimedia applications. Chapter 12 reflects current thinking on assessment by presenting new material on alternative assessment and rubrics. Chapter 13 now has more on themes and

the social-emotional environment. Chapter 14 addresses family literacy and direct instruction.

Facsimiles of elementary school reading materials, focused examples, model activities, classroom scenarios, and vignettes that focus on strategies continue to be plentiful.

New to this edition are *Time for Reflection* features occurring several times in each chapter. These features encourage students to reflect on what they believe about current issues and debates in the reading field. New chapter end matter offers suggestions for use with *journals* and *portfolios*—keys to ongoing professional development.

Coverage

The first chapter discusses components of the reading act, theories related to reading, and principles of teaching reading. Chapter 2 presents information on emergent literacy. The next two chapters are devoted to techniques of teaching word recognition and meaning vocabulary. Comprehension strategies and skills are covered in the two comprehension chapters, 5 and 6. Major approaches and materials for reading instruction are described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 deals with language and literature; Chapter 9 discusses methods of teaching reading/study techniques; and Chapter 10 tells how to present the reading skills necessary for reading in individual content areas. Chapter 11 addresses use of technology for literacy instruction and learning. Assessment of student progress is discussed in Chapter 12, and classroom management and organization are treated in Chapter 13. Chapter 14 covers the teaching of reading to students with special needs. The Appendix contains answers to Test Yourself quizzes.

Features of the Text

This text provides an abundance of practical activities and strategies for improving students' reading performance. *Illustrative lesson plans, classroom scenarios, focus on strategies vignettes, learning-center ideas, model activities,* and *instructional games* are all presented. Thus, this text should continue to be a valuable reference for inservice teachers.

In order to make this text easy to study, we have included the following features:

Setting Objectives, part of the opening material in each chapter, provides objectives to be met as the chapter is read.

Key Vocabulary, a list of important terms which readers should know, is included to help students focus on key chapter concepts.

Introductions to each chapter help readers develop a mental set for reading the chapter and give them a framework into which they can fit the ideas they will read about.

Examples, Model Activities, Classroom Scenarios, and Focus on Strategies sections clarify the material in the text and put it into perspective.

Time for Reflection is a new feature located at strategic points throughout each chapter to encourage readers to think about the subject matter that has been presented and decide where they stand on debated issues.

Test Yourself, a section at the end of each chapter, includes questions that check retention of the chapter's material as a whole; these questions may also serve as a basis for discussion.

For your journal . . . presents topics the readers can write about in order to further their understanding of the ideas and methods presented in the chapter.

. . . And your portfolio presents ideas to include in a portfolio for assessment purposes.

A **Glossary** contains meanings of specialized terms used in this book.

Instructional Components That Accompany the Text

Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Items   This teaching aid provides supplementary material including model syllabi, chapter outlines, key vocabulary terms and definitions, instructional media selections, suggested teaching strategies, and suggested readings. It also includes listings of resources for independent reading activities, multimedia materials, and computer software. In addition, essay and objective questions are provided for each chapter, as well as ideas for implementing authentic assessment.

Computerized Test Bank   Questions from the Instructor's Resource Manual are available in computerized format as well.

Transparencies   A set of 80 overhead transparencies reproduce important text figures, lists, strategies, and activities, and also present new graphics designed for the transparency package. The transparency package is available upon adoption of the text.

Teacher Education Station Web Site (http://www.hmco.com/college/, click on **"Education")**   This web site provides additional pedagogic support and resources for beginning and experienced professionals in education.

Acknowledgments

Major Approaches and Materials for Reading Instruction   271

7

Language and Literature   324

8

Reading/Study Techniques 365

Reading in the Content Areas 405

Readers with Special Needs 549

The Reading Act

When you finish reading this chapter, you should be able to

▷ Discuss the reading product.

▷ Describe the reading process.

▷ Explain three types of theories of the reading process: subskill, interactive, and transactive.

▷ Identify some attributes of the whole language philosophy.

▷ Name some principles on which effective reading instruction is based.

The Reading Process

The Reading
Product

Components of
the Reading Act

The Reading
Process:
Selected Theories

Importance
of Reading

The
Reading Act

Twelve Principles
of Teaching Reading

Few adults would question the importance of reading to effective functioning in our complex technological world. Educators have long made reading instruction a priority in the school curriculum, and many children come to school with a sense of the importance of reading in their lives. Unfortunately, however, not all students have this vision. One of the tasks teachers face is to help students see the importance of acquiring reading ability for performing everyday tasks effectively and the value of reading as a source of information, enjoyment, and recreation. To accomplish this task effectively, teachers need to know something about the reading act, know some useful principles of reading instruction, and understand some of the theories on which instructional practices in reading are based. They will also benefit from exposure to current philosophical positions related to reading instruction, such as the whole language philosophy and the belief in a balanced approach to reading instruction.

Reading is a highly complex act. It includes two major components—a process and a product—each of which is also complicated. Teachers need to be aware of these components and their different aspects in order to respond effectively to their students' reading needs.

This chapter analyzes the reading product and process. It describes three theories of the reading process and presents some sound principles for reading instruction, with explanatory comments.

The Importance of Reading

The ability to read is vital to functioning effectively in a literate society such as ours. However, children who do not understand the importance of learning to read will not be motivated to learn. Learning to read takes effort, and children who see the value of reading in their personal activities will be more likely to work hard than those who fail to see the benefits.

Teachers should have little trouble demonstrating to children that reading is important. Every aspect of life involves reading. Road signs direct travelers to particular destinations, inform drivers of hazards, and remind people about traffic regulations. There are menus in restaurants, labels on cans, printed advertisements, newspapers, magazines, insurance forms, income tax forms, and campaign and travel brochures. These reading situations are inescapable. Even very young children can be helped to see the need to read the signs on restrooms, the labels on individual desks in their classrooms, and the labeled areas for supplies. In fact, these young children are often eager to learn to read and are ready to attack the task enthusiastically. However, children do not automatically realize the "profusion of literacy activities in the nonschool world" (Kotrla, 1997, p. 702).

Reading tasks become increasingly complex as students advance through the grades and require continuing improvement. Anderson (1988) suggests sparking the interest of middle grade students through career education activities, helping them in this way to see that reading is a life skill that is relevant to their future success. The children can choose occupations that interest them and list the reading skills each occupation requires. They can take one or more field trips to

Students may read for relaxation, vicarious adventure, or aesthetic pleasure, as well as to gain information. (© *Laimute E. Druskis/Stock Boston*)

businesses to see workers using reading to carry out their jobs, and they can hear resource people speak to their classes about how they personally need reading in their jobs. These resource people may bring to class examples of the reading materials they must use to perform their daily tasks. The students may also interview parents and others to learn about reading demands in a wide variety of careers. In many cases, the reading activities involve such applications as use of computer databases and electronic mail.

As important as functional reading is to everyday living, another important goal of reading is enjoyment. Teachers must attempt to show students that reading can be interesting to them for reasons other than strictly utilitarian ones. Students may read for relaxation, vicarious adventure, or aesthetic pleasure as they immerse themselves in tales of other times and places or those of the here and now. They may also read to obtain information about areas of interest or hobbies to fill their leisure time. To help children see reading as a pleasurable activity, teachers should read to them each day on a variety of themes and topics, from a variety of genres, and from the works of many authors. They should also make many books available for children to look at and read for themselves, and they should set aside time for children to read from self-selected materials. Students should be given opportunities to share information from and reactions to their reading in both oral and written forms. They should be encouraged to think about the things they are reading and to relate them to their own experiences.