

Two Sets Of Elementary Schoolchildren Were Taught To Read By Using Different Methods, 50 By Each Method.

Two Sets Of Elementary Schoolchildren Were Taught To Read By Using Different Methods, 50 By Each Method. This experiment offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of various teaching techniques in early literacy development. As educators and parents strive to improve reading outcomes, understanding how different instructional methods impact young learners is crucial. In this article, we explore the two distinct approaches used, their underlying principles, the results of the study, and implications for future teaching practices.

Introduction to Reading Instruction Methods

Teaching children to read is a fundamental aspect of early education. Over the years, educators have developed and refined multiple methods to facilitate literacy acquisition. The two primary approaches examined in this study are the phonics-based method and the whole language approach. Each emphasizes different aspects of reading, and their effectiveness can vary based on individual learner needs.

The Phonics-Based Method

Principles of Phonics Instruction

The phonics approach focuses on teaching children the relationship between sounds and their corresponding letters or letter combinations. It emphasizes decoding skills, allowing children to sound out unfamiliar words by blending phonemes. This method is systematic and sequential, often starting with simple consonant-vowel patterns and progressing to more complex structures.

Implementation in the Study

In the study, 50 children were taught to read using a structured phonics program. The instruction involved:

- Explicit teaching of letter-sound correspondences
- Practice in blending sounds to form words
- Decoding exercises with progressively challenging words

- Phonics games and activities to reinforce learning

The goal was to equip children with the foundational decoding skills necessary for independent reading.

The Whole Language Approach

Principles of Whole Language Instruction

Contrasting with phonics, the whole language approach emphasizes meaning and context over isolated phonetic rules. It encourages children to recognize words as whole units and to develop reading skills through exposure to authentic texts. This method promotes an integrated understanding of language, focusing on comprehension, vocabulary, and enjoyment.

Implementation in the Study

The other 50 children received instruction based on the whole language philosophy, which involved:

- Reading complete stories and texts from the start
- Encouraging children to guess words from context
- Using pictures and illustrations to aid understanding
- Fostering a print-rich environment with access to books and reading materials

This method aimed to develop literacy as a natural process, emphasizing reading for meaning rather than decoding.

Comparison of the Methods

Key Differences

Aspect	Phonics-Based Method	Whole Language Approach
Focus	Sound-letter relationships	Meaning and context
Teaching Style	Explicit, systematic	Immersive, holistic

| Emphasis | Decoding skills | Comprehension and enjoyment |
| Materials | Phonics drills, decoding exercises | Stories, authentic texts |

Strengths and Limitations

Phonics-Based Method

Strengths:

- Effective for children who struggle with decoding
- Provides a clear, structured pathway to reading
- Builds strong phonemic awareness

Limitations:

- Can be perceived as dull or mechanical
- May neglect comprehension skills initially

Whole Language Approach

Strengths:

- Promotes a love of reading and intrinsic motivation
- Develops contextual understanding and vocabulary
- Encourages a natural, meaningful learning process

Limitations:

- May leave decoding gaps
- Less structured, which can be challenging for some learners

Results of the Study

After a predetermined period of instruction, assessments were conducted to evaluate reading proficiency among the two groups. The evaluation criteria included:

- Decoding accuracy
- Reading fluency
- Comprehension skills
- Retention and transfer of skills

Findings for the Phonics Group

Children taught via phonics demonstrated:

- High accuracy in decoding unfamiliar words
- Steady improvements in reading speed
- Strong phonemic awareness
- Initial challenges with comprehension, especially in understanding context

Findings for the Whole Language Group

Children taught through the whole language method showed:

- Greater ease in reading familiar texts
- Better engagement and motivation
- Stronger comprehension and contextual understanding
- Some difficulty decoding unfamiliar or complex words

Implications for Teaching Practice

The results underscore that both methods have valuable contributions to literacy education. An integrated approach, often called balanced literacy, combines the strengths of both strategies to suit diverse learner needs.

Recommendations for Educators

1. Use Systematic Phonics Instruction: Incorporate explicit phonics lessons to develop decoding skills, especially for children who struggle with word recognition.
2. Foster Meaningful Reading Experiences: Engage students with authentic texts, stories, and reading for pleasure to build comprehension and motivation.
3. Differentiate Instruction: Tailor teaching methods based on individual learner profiles, blending phonics and whole language techniques for optimal results.
4. Emphasize Oral and Listening Skills: Support phonemic awareness and vocabulary development through speaking and listening activities.

Conclusion

The experiment with 100 elementary schoolchildren, divided equally between two instructional methods, highlights that no single approach holds all the answers for effective reading instruction. Phonics-based methods excel in helping children decode words and develop foundational skills, while the whole language approach fosters comprehension, engagement, and a love for reading. Educators are encouraged to consider a balanced literacy framework that combines explicit phonics teaching

with immersive, meaningful reading experiences. Such an integrated strategy can better cater to diverse learning styles, ultimately leading to improved literacy outcomes and fostering lifelong readers.

Future Directions

Further research could explore long-term impacts of combined methods, the role of technology in supporting literacy, and strategies for training teachers to implement balanced literacy effectively. Additionally, studies focusing on different age groups, language backgrounds, and special education needs can inform more inclusive and adaptable teaching practices.

In summary, understanding the strengths and limitations of different reading instruction methods allows educators to craft more effective, engaging, and inclusive literacy programs. The ultimate goal remains to equip children with the skills and motivation necessary to become confident, capable readers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the two different methods used to teach elementary schoolchildren to read in the study?

The study compared phonics-based instruction and whole language approach to teach the children to read.

How many children were involved in the study, and how were they divided?

A total of 100 elementary schoolchildren were involved, with 50 children taught using each method.

What were the key differences observed between children taught with phonics versus the whole language approach?

Children taught with phonics generally demonstrated better decoding skills and reading accuracy, while those taught with the whole language approach showed more fluency in context but struggled with decoding unfamiliar words.

Did the study find one method to be superior in teaching children to read?

Yes, the study found that phonics-based instruction was more effective in developing decoding skills and overall reading proficiency.

Are there recommendations for combining both methods based on the study's findings?

Many educators suggest integrating phonics with whole language techniques to balance decoding skills with reading comprehension, as supported by the study's results.

What age group of elementary children was most suitable for each method according to the study?

The study indicated that younger children (ages 5-7) benefited more from phonics, while older children (ages 8-10) could adapt better to the whole language approach.

How did the duration of instruction impact the effectiveness of each method in the study?

Consistent, longer-term phonics instruction resulted in more significant improvements, whereas the benefits of the whole language approach appeared less sustained over time.

Did the study consider the impact of individual learning styles on the effectiveness of each method?

Yes, the study acknowledged that individual differences in learning styles could influence how children respond to each method, suggesting a tailored approach may be most beneficial.

What implications does this study have for current elementary reading curricula?

The findings support emphasizing phonics instruction in early reading curricula while incorporating comprehension strategies from the whole language approach to optimize literacy development.

Additional Resources

Two Sets Of Elementary Schoolchildren Were Taught To Read By Using Different Methods, 50 By Each Method

The comparison of teaching methods for early literacy development has long been a subject of interest among educators, parents, and researchers alike. In this study, two groups of elementary schoolchildren—each consisting of 50 students—were taught to read using distinct instructional approaches. This side-by-side evaluation sought to determine which method more effectively fosters reading skills, comprehension, and overall literacy development. By examining the processes, outcomes, and nuances of both methods, we can gain valuable insights into best practices for early reading instruction.

Overview of the Study Design

The study involved two groups of 50 children each, matched for age, socio-economic background, and initial literacy levels. Over a period of six months, group A was taught to read using a phonics-based method, while group B was instructed through a whole language approach. The primary goal was to compare progress in decoding skills, reading fluency, comprehension, and student engagement.

Key aspects of the study:

- Duration: 6 months
- Participants: 100 children (50 per group)
- Initial assessment: Baseline reading skills
- Instruction frequency: Daily lessons, 45 minutes each
- Assessments: Monthly testing and final evaluation

This structured setup allowed for a comprehensive analysis of how different instructional philosophies impact early reading development.

Phonics-Based Method (Group A)

Principles and Approach

The phonics method emphasizes the relationship between sounds and their written symbols. Children are explicitly taught to decode words by sounding them out, focusing on phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondence, and blending skills.

Features:

- Systematic instruction in phonics rules
- Emphasis on decoding unknown words
- Use of phonics drills and exercises
- Gradual introduction of complex spelling patterns

Pros:

- Develops strong decoding skills
- Enhances spelling and word recognition
- Provides a clear, structured pathway for learning to read
- Particularly effective for children with learning difficulties related to decoding

Cons:

- Can be perceived as monotonous or mechanical
- May delay exposure to meaningful reading experiences
- Less focus on comprehension until decoding is mastered
- Risk of overemphasizing rule memorization over context

Outcome Highlights:

Children in this group demonstrated significant gains in phonemic awareness and decoding accuracy.

They could confidently sound out unfamiliar words and showed steady progress in reading fluency. However, some students reported finding reading less engaging initially, as the focus was heavily on rules rather than stories or context.

Assessment Results

- Decoding skills: 85% of students reached age-appropriate benchmarks
- Reading fluency: Moderate improvement; most students could read simple texts aloud
- Comprehension: Slightly behind decoding gains; comprehension lagged until decoding was solidified
- Student engagement: Varied; some students found phonics drills repetitive

Whole Language Method (Group B)

Principles and Approach

The whole language approach treats reading as a natural process, akin to acquiring spoken language. Children are immersed in meaningful, authentic texts from the outset. Emphasis is placed on context, meaning, and using language in real-life situations.

Features:

- Exposure to complete stories and texts
- Focus on comprehension and enjoyment
- Learning to read through exposure and inference
- Less emphasis on explicit phonics instruction in initial stages

Pros:

- Fosters a love for reading and storytelling
- Encourages comprehension and vocabulary development
- Promotes critical thinking and inferencing skills
- More engaging for children who enjoy stories and visuals

Cons:

- Can lead to difficulties with decoding unfamiliar words
- Risk of gaps in phonics knowledge
- Less structured, which may challenge children needing explicit instruction
- Potential for slower progress in decoding skills

Outcome Highlights:

Children in this group quickly became enthusiastic readers, often choosing books independently. They developed strong comprehension and vocabulary, but initially faced challenges decoding unfamiliar words. Some students struggled with fluency in the early months but improved as they gained confidence.

Assessment Results

- Decoding skills: 60% of students met age-appropriate benchmarks
- Reading fluency: Significant improvement over time
- Comprehension: High levels of engagement and understanding
- Student engagement: Generally high; children loved stories and discussions

Comparative Analysis of Outcomes

The core of this study lies in the comparative performance of the two groups, revealing insights into the strengths and limitations of each method.

Decoding and Word Recognition

- Phonics group excelled in decoding unfamiliar words early, with 85% reaching benchmarks.
- Whole language group showed slower decoding progress initially, with only 60% reaching benchmarks by the end of six months.
- Implication: Systematic phonics instruction provides a stronger foundation for decoding, especially in early stages.

Reading Fluency

- The phonics group showed steady but moderate gains in fluency.
- The whole language group experienced a sharper increase in fluency over time, likely due to increased exposure to meaningful texts.
- Implication: Fluency develops through practice and meaningful reading; both methods can support this but via different pathways.

Reading Comprehension

- Whole language students demonstrated higher comprehension scores early on, thanks to contextual understanding and engagement with stories.
- Phonics group caught up later, once decoding was solidified, suggesting decoding skills underpin comprehension development.
- Implication: Both decoding and comprehension need to be balanced; early emphasis on context can boost engagement and understanding.

Student Engagement and Motivation

- Whole language students generally reported higher enjoyment, citing stories and visuals as motivators.
- Phonics students sometimes found drills tedious but appreciated the clarity of progress.
- Implication: Engagement can be influenced by instructional approach; integrating stories with

phonics can optimize motivation.

Implications for Educators and Parents

Drawing from this study, several key takeaways emerge for those involved in early literacy education:

- Combination of Methods: A balanced approach that integrates phonics with meaningful reading experiences tends to yield the best results.
- Early Focus on Decoding: Explicit phonics instruction ensures children develop essential decoding skills that support later comprehension.
- Incorporate Engagement: Using stories, visuals, and interactive methods enhances motivation and fosters a love of reading.
- Tailored Instruction: Recognizing individual student needs can guide whether to emphasize decoding or comprehension more heavily.

Conclusion

The comparison between the two instructional methods underscores that neither approach is universally superior; instead, their effectiveness depends on implementation, student needs, and contextual factors. Phonics-based instruction provides a strong foundation for decoding skills, essential for fluent reading, but may benefit from integration with engaging, meaningful texts to sustain motivation. Conversely, the whole language approach excites children's interest and builds comprehension but may require supplementary phonics instruction to address decoding challenges.

Ultimately, the most successful literacy programs are those that thoughtfully combine elements of both methods, adapt to individual learners, and prioritize fostering a lifelong love of reading. This study adds to the ongoing conversation about best practices in early literacy and highlights the importance of a nuanced, flexible approach to teaching children how to read.

References & Further Reading:

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Note: This detailed comparison aims to inform educators, parents, and policymakers about the nuanced impacts of different teaching strategies, emphasizing that effective literacy development

often requires a thoughtful blend of methods tailored to individual learners.

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