

Best Practices in Reading Instruction: An International Effort

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Research in the United States and from around the world continues to support the systematic teaching of phonics as central to the understanding and mastery of any alphabetic writing system. Two reports, *Teaching Reading: Report and Recommendations, National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy* (http://www.dest.gov.au/nitl/documents/report_recommendations.pdf), a research-based report from the Australian Government, dated December 2005, and *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading*, a report from the United Kingdom, dated March 2006 (<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/0201-2006PDF-EN-01.pdf>), both highlight the need for these effective practices in the teaching of literacy.

The U.K. report also emphasizes the importance of effective teacher training and good teaching methods, stating, "We know that, to be effective, a high quality program must go hand in hand with high quality teaching." The Australian report calls for effective initial instruction to reduce the amount of costly remedial programs. This report discusses in detail the debate about methods of early reading instruction, providing an interesting discussion of the whole-language movement and the "constructivism view of teaching."

The Australian report clearly endorses the importance of direct, explicit instruction, ongoing assessment, and systematic and synthetic phonics instruction. The need for high quality teacher-training programs is also emphasized.

In 1997, the United States Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel, called the National Reading Panel (NRP), to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read.

For over two years, the NRP reviewed research-based knowledge on reading instruction and held open panel meetings in Washington, D.C. and regional meetings across the United States. On April 13, 2000, the NRP concluded its work and submitted *The Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/smallbook_pdf.pdf) at a hearing before the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. Publications such as *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read* (<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/upload/PRFbooklet.pdf>), a 58-page teacher's guide provide a framework for using the findings of the National

Reading Panel in the classroom. This guide describes the NRP findings and provides analysis and discussion in five critical components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Each section clearly outlines implications for classroom instruction in each component area with examples of how the findings can be implemented. The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) has bridged the gap from these research activities to practice by creating a research-based tool for practitioners. An IDA committee chaired by Dr. Louisa C. Moats authored this tool called *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading* (<http://www.interdys.org/standards.htm>) and adapted it for use in the various Global Partners' native languages.

IDA has 18 Global Partners, dyslexia associations throughout the world, that partner with IDA to provide information, advocacy, research, teacher training, assessment, identification, and treatment including remediation and accommodations of language-based learning disorders or dyslexia. IDA's Global Partners have embraced these standards as a guide to assist them as they develop their own standards and coursework for teachers of reading, spelling, and writing instruction.

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