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# The Most Effective Method of Teaching Reading

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**Abstract:** Students usually get difficulties in learning English subject. Especially for reading section. Teaching reading is not as simple as people think. They should have any more practice and should enlarge their knowledge to deliver reading materials. Researchers found that the English teachers used interesting methods that students can learn about reading text in a good condition. Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this article is to know what method used in teaching reading applied by English teachers, and how the method is used in teaching reading.

**Keywords:** method, synthetic phonics methods, teaching reading, automaticity, decoding and lexical knowledge, memorization.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the modern educated world, communication is a fundamental skill necessary for success in every venue of life. We are constantly bombarded with communicated messages, whether they are encoded in spoken, written, or visual forms. Consequently, one of the essential components of the effective use of communication is the ability to read written language proficiently; however, reading seems to be a lost art in our modern society. Although the majority of the population can read, many children, teenagers, and adults seriously struggle with this highly important skill, making it necessary to determine what steps educators need to take to improve reading aptitude amongst the general public.

In order to determine the best method for teaching reading, it is important to understand exactly what reading is. Reading is an active process which requires the use of multiple skills simultaneously (Walker, 2000)<sup>(1)</sup>. Spache and Spache (1969)<sup>(2)</sup> describe reading this way: The reader directs his attention to the printed page with his mind intent on meaning. He reacts to each word with a group of mental associations regarding the word form, its meaning, and its sound. With the aid of these associations, he discriminates this word from all others, also using clues of general configuration, distinctive characteristics of the shape, some of the letters or syllables, and the implications of the sense or pattern of the sentence. Thus, the process begins with word recognition. As the meanings of successive words become clear, they are fused into thought or ideas. Thus, among other abilities, successful reading requires phonemic awareness, an ability to decode unfamiliar words, word attack skills, and an understanding of language structure (Honig, 2001)<sup>(3)</sup>. This means that accomplished readers recognize letters and words, know how to pronounce them correctly, understand what they mean, and know how these words work together in phrases and sentences to create meaningful language. Fluency, the rate and accuracy with which students read, is another crucial component of reading. Successful readers develop this important skill only through extensive practice. As Honig (2001) said, "Students become fluent readers by reading".

### The Importance of Reading

The ability to read is a skill necessary for success in today's society. But what makes it so important? According to Walker (2000), reading serves a variety of functions including

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“reading for pleasure, reading for information, and reading to remember”

Reading is a gateway to learning anything about everything. It helps to discover new things and educate yourself in any area of life you are interested in. People can find a book on just about any subject they can imagine, dive in and start learning.

When people watch television or a movie, all the information is given to them on the screen – there’s nothing they need to imagine. A book in its pure form is just words on a page, and their minds have to do the work, imagining the words coming to life. This does wonders to develop their creativity and imagination. Giving students access to a world of words is one of the best ways to improve their vocabulary and enhance their spelling skills. New knowledge that’s gained through enjoyment has a tendency to stick and doesn’t even feel like work. Both their written and spoken communication abilities can be improved through regular reading.

### **Active and passive reading.**

Passive reading-is reading without any meaningful engagement. It is when students read a page in a book and not take in anything they have just read or caught themselves reading and re-reading the same paragraph without actively acknowledging the words.

Active reading it is engage with what they’re reading. They read with an open and questioning mind, and they stop to think more about what things mean. Here are some ideas, as set out of how skilled active readers read:

- They can predict what will happen next in a story using clues they gain from reading.
- They create questions about the main idea, message or plot.
- They monitor understanding of the sequence, context or characters.
- They stop to clarify parts of the text that have confused them. They connect events in the text to prior knowledge or experience.

### **The importance of reading comprehension**

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand a written passage of text. It’s the bridge between the passive reading and active reading, and the crucial link to effective reading – essential for a rich academic, professional and personal life. Reading comprehension involves several different processes, such as imagining what the words describe, understanding the context of the book and being able to answer questions related to a text. Think about a book you’ve read before, and then try to summarise what the book was about. If students can answer questions about a book or text, explain important events that happened in a story and have an opinion about why the events may have occurred, they’re displaying comprehension skills. Without reading and comprehension skills, students will struggle to grow academically, as reading is the foundation to all academic subjects such as History, Mathematics and Science. It also influences student’s ability to write. Reading fluency is also a very important part of reading comprehension, as readers who spend their time decoding words often lose the understanding of what is being read.

In order to comprehend a reading selection, accomplished readers rely on two sources of meaning: individual words and the passage as a whole. Honig (2001) claims that “the key to unlocking meaning starts with the automatic recognition of each written word, which brings the meaning of that word to consciousness”.

In other words, a successful reader must be able to automatically recognize and understand individual words so he can concentrate on the more complex task of understanding the passage as a whole. In fact, the effective reader must automatically recognize at least 95% of

the words in a passage—otherwise reading comprehension decreases (Honig, 2001). These vital skills are where most reading difficulties observed in modern society occur, but how do we correct this serious problem? The answer lies in the effective teaching of reading at the primary level.

### **Methods of Teaching Reading**

In recent years, various methods of teaching reading have been the continuous subject of a great deal of highly animated debate among educational committees, teachers, and parents. Although numerous educational techniques for teaching reading exist, these methods more or less fall into two widely variant categories, namely whole language systems and phonetic systems. However, whole language and phonetic methods can also be melded together to create a balanced system for teaching reading to elementary students.

Whole language methods are more commonly known as language experience or whole-to-part methods. In the past, educators extensively used these methods to teach reading to elementary students, but today these methods are used mostly in conjunction with the phonetic method. Whole language methods of teaching reading implement a belief in the importance of learning meaning first and then applying that meaning to written language (Bovee, 1972)<sup>(4)</sup>. Spache (1969) states that “more than any other approach to the teaching of reading, the language-experience approach conceives of learning to read as part of the process of language development. It alone recognizes the close relationship among reading, speaking, writing, and listening”. Proponents of this method believe that elementary students will “acquire reading skills by being read to, immersion in print, and learning them in the context of reading for meaning” (Honig, 2001). According to Jeynes and Littell (2000)<sup>(5)</sup>: The core of the whole language construct seems to involve emphasis on (1) whole pieces of literature and functional language as opposed to abridgements, adaptations, or segmented tests; (2) individual students’ choice as opposed to teacher-sponsored, whole-class assignments; and (3) integrated language experiences as opposed to direct instruction in isolated skill sequences. Specific educational techniques that fall within the broad category of whole language methods include, but are not limited to, the word method, the sentence method, and the story method (Bovee, 1972). These techniques integrate reading with the other language arts, such as speaking, writing, and listening (Honig, 2001). For example, the teacher reads a whole message, either a sentence or an entire passage, to the students repeatedly. Then, the students memorize and recite the passages individually and as a group. Another whole language technique consists of students dictating a story or personal experience to the teacher. The teacher writes each student’s words down. The students then memorize and recite their story (Matthes, 1972)<sup>(6)</sup>. Whole language proponents recognize these activities as “reading” (Heilman, 1998, p. 10). In this way, the whole language method of reading is a child-centered curriculum and as such stresses the importance of developing individualized reading programs (Heilman, 1998)<sup>(7)</sup>.

The phonetic method of teaching reading, on the other hand, is more skills based than the whole language method. It relies on a part-to-whole framework and provides two sub-methods: the analytic and the synthetic phonics methods. The phonetic method requires the teacher to teach reading skills explicitly to students, making it the most widely accepted method for teaching reading. Thus, teachers frequently use the phonetic method to teach reading in the modern elementary classroom. The phonetic method stems from the idea that students must first understand the key elements of language, which include letters, sounds, syllables, and words, before being able to read and reach comprehension. Two educational techniques extensively used in elementary classrooms today fall into the phonetic method category, the synthetic method and the analytic method (Bovee, 1972). Both methods “teach

beginning readers that printed letters and letter combinations represent speech sounds heard in words” (Heilman, 1998, p. 1). Basal reading textbooks combine explicit instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness with interesting, age-appropriate stories that allow beginning readers to practice phonics skills. The phonetic methods concentrate on developing two main abilities: phonemic awareness and decoding. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that spoken language is made up of individual sounds (phonemes), and decoding is the ability to turn spellings into sounds or sound words out (Honig, 2001). Lyon (1994)<sup>(8)</sup> states that “the ability to decode single words accurately and fluently is dependent upon the ability to segment words and syllables into abstract constituent sound units (phonemes)”. Thus, these important reading skills are mutually dependent and must be taught simultaneously.

Phonetic instruction generally proceeds through a developmental sequence that explicitly teaches each of the components of phonemic awareness and decoding. Honig suggests the following sequence: 1) word segmentation; 2) rhyme recognition and production; 3) syllable blending, segmentation, and deletion; 4) onset and rime blending; 5) phoneme matching and isolation; 6) phoneme blending and segmentation; and 7) phoneme deletion and substitution.

The balanced method of teaching reading incorporates ideas from both the whole language and phonetic methods. It includes both explicit, systematic reading instruction and whole-language experience. Students practice phonics skills by interacting with and being immersed in quality literature which reinforces reading skills. The balanced method of teaching reading uses three main strategies to develop reading comprehension skills: 1) explicit, systematic teaching of phonemic awareness, decoding, comprehension strategies, and text organization, 2) discussions about literature, and 3) reading a large amount of varied text. Thus, the balanced method allows teachers to explicitly instruct their students in reading skills such as alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, phonics, decoding, and other word attack skills while immersing them in language and literature-based activities. These reading skills are taught in an active, problem-solving way. For example, teachers can use activities such as making up rhymes, singing songs, completing word sorts, and playing games to allow students to develop phonemic awareness by playing with the sounds of language. Teachers using the balanced method not only teach reading skills but guide their students in discussing and practicing how to use these skills.

## CONCLUSION

The most effective method of teaching Reading using a balanced model. The ability to read proficiently is a skill that all students must develop in order to succeed in today’s culture. Thus, the goals of any early reading program should be to enable almost every student to comprehend and read fluently grade-appropriate material, understand the meaning of what they have read, be well-read, and enjoy and be able to learn from reading. The balanced method encourages educators to develop individualized reading programs that address each student’s specific needs. These programs set goals, provide motivation, and keep records for each student. By balancing skills instruction and language experience, educators can create a learning environment where reading failure is preventable.

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