

Reading After Phonics Steps To Reading Success

Pat Doran M.Ed.

www.edu-steps.com

Re-reading is a good strategy, but be on the alert for those students who are simply shadowing the reading, not actually reading aloud. Also, when you are having your students reread, make certain that they can decode all of the words in the book. Therefore, the materials you will use must have only DECODABLE text. Otherwise, your students may be reciting rather than reading. Now, while there is value in recitation, we must never confuse it with reading. One day, as I was walking up and down the aisles in a grocery store, picking up a few items, I encountered a mother and her young son, about age 8. Tucked under his arm was a familiar book, *Green Eggs and Ham*. After checking out, I was walking to my car and I heard the boy behind me reading *Green Eggs and Ham*. I was quite impressed with his fluency and expression, so I -- teacher that I am -- turned around to compliment him. There he was, walking behind his mother, saying the words of the book correctly, clearly and with enthusiasm -- with his book still closed and tucked under his arm! Obviously, he was reciting, not reading.

On another occasion, I was asked to meet with a 5th grade boy whose teacher was recommending either retention or testing for special education services. The mother was concerned because the boy was big for his age, articulate, bright, and creative and loved to read. She couldn't understand why he was failing in all of his classes. There was one exception: he did exceptionally well on math computation, but did poorly on story problems.

When I met, the boy had brought one of the books he enjoyed reading. He opened it and proudly read much of *Cat in the Hat* to me. His mother beamed as he read. However, I noticed that as he looked down at the pages, his eyes didn't move left to right. I then handed the boy a passage from a book at that same grade level to have him do a "cold reading." The boy began to get flushed and to shake. In fact, he was terrified! His mother and I were quite concerned and immediately, I took the book away and told him that he didn't need to read. It took us a while to calm him down.

His mother explained that in his classroom, all students were expected to get up in the front of the class and read. She said that he would bring home a book and have her read and re-read it many, many times to him until he could "read" it back to her without mistakes. She had no idea that he was memorizing it.

When the boy became comfortable with me, I tested him and found that this fifth-grader was illiterate, knowing only a few sight words. He had no phonics decoding skills whatsoever. After taking him through the [Phonics Steps to Reading Success](#) systematic/synthetic program, he was so thrilled to really read.

His mother transferred him to another school where he was achieving A's in all of his classes much to everyone's joy!

Solid research indicates that rereading is necessary and effective to develop fluency and automaticity in reading, but it must be of a decodable passage. That means that the students must have been taught the concepts required to read the passage.

The passage or text must be decodable. Once the student has been taken completely through the reading and spelling tasks of Phonics Steps To Reading Success, most words will be decodable.

Therefore, re-reading practice can be done as in the following suggestions:

IN A CLASSROOM for whole class, large or small groups:

1. Teach Phonics Steps To Reading Success decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) strategies and review the concepts daily by use of overview of the concepts covered or the phonics concepts' flashcards.
2. For reading materials, use only those materials that require the students to use the phonics concepts covered thus far.
3. The teacher would lay the foundation for the reading by discussing with the students essential background knowledge and developing an understanding of the vocabulary used in the material.
4. The teacher might randomly draw names from a jar or do 'round robin reading'.
5. The child whose name was chosen reads a single sentence of a decodable story, the reader or the textbook, depending on circumstances.
 - a. If the one sentence is too brief, the student would read two sentences.
 - b. If the child is struggling, the teacher will read softly through the sentence with the child.
 - c. The teacher must develop the environment of respect in the classroom, explaining at the beginning of the year and remind throughout the year that different people have different skills and that we are in class to help, support, and guide each other.
 - d. Explain to students that some individuals may need help because everyone learns in different ways. Under no circumstances, permit any disrespect.
 - e. A good class motto is, "AT EVERY MOMENT, DO WHAT RESPECT REQUIRES."
6. Then, the whole group will reread the single sentence.
7. After that, another name is drawn at random for that child to read one sentence, throughout a whole paragraph or passage.
8. Choral reading of the entire passage will follow and move on to the next passage and repeat the steps above.
9. Comprehension questions can be interspersed throughout the reading.
10. Provide a decodable practice assignment, quiz, or follow-up.
 - a. Assuming that the text is perhaps only 2-4 paragraphs, the students will be given a **decodable** handout that will test their reading comprehension.
 - b. Students generally will do this work independently.
 - c. While they are working on the worksheets, the teacher may walk throughout room, visiting the rows or groups in order to assist any students who may be struggling, frustrated, unsure, or have questions.
 - d. If the teacher does help a student, he/she may want to indicate the area of help on the student's paper with a motivational stamp, such as a happy face, near the specific place on the paper where the assistance was needed.
 - i. This will be a code to the teacher to remind the teacher that the student needs extra help in that particular skill set.
 - ii. To the child, the star will appear to be placed randomly, like the other students receive.
 - iii. The comprehension worksheet will let the teacher know which students actually understood what they read and how they are capable of responding to written questions and/or where students need extra help.

One *caveat*: Often teachers use re-reading of rhyming, predictable books. All too often, children may merely memorize the passages as parents and teachers think the children are *reading*.

IN A TUTORING SETTING:

1. Teach Phonics Steps To Reading Success decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling) strategies.
2. Consistently, for each lesson, review the concepts that have been taught previously.
 - a. Primary students and some special education students may need more time for processing.
 - i. Phonics Steps To Reading Success decoding and encoding tasks will require a slower pace.
 - ii. Students may need to practice reading decodable text to reinforce the concepts that have been taught and will be taught.
 - b. Post primary students whose reading tasks in other classes are at a higher level require a fast-paced approach.
 - i. Phonics Steps To Reading Success decoding and encoding tasks will require a faster pace.
 - ii. Students may need more vocabulary development.
 - iii. If time is limited, teach Phonics Steps To Reading Success concepts from beginning to end, review concepts before each session, and encourage the student(s) to use the phonics concepts in other classes.
 - iv. If time permits, once the students have completed Phonics Steps To Reading Success, follow the re-reading strategies above.