

# SO WHERE HAVE WE TRAVELED SINCE 1967?

- P. David Pearson, UC Berkeley
- For a copy of these slides, go to  
[WWW.SCIENCEANDLITERACY.ORG](http://WWW.SCIENCEANDLITERACY.ORG)  
after Sunday

# By the way, Bob

- Letter names still rules as a predictor
- Albeit, along with phonemic awareness and
- Various rapid naming tasks
- SRA variation on no pictures linguistic readers
- ITA story

# Two routes

- Practice
  - Basals
  - Trends and movements
- Research
  - National synthesis

# Examining trends in research

# The sources

- Bond and Dykstra, *First Grade Studies*, 1967
- Chall, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, 1967
- Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, 1985
- Adams, *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, 1990
- Snow and Burns, *Preventing Reading Difficulties*, 1998
- *National Reading Panel*, 2000

# Up through PRD

- Pearson, P.D. (1999). Essay Book Reviews: A historically based review of *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2(34), 231-246.

# Features/Issues examined

- Methods preference
- How/when should phonics be taught
- Phonemic Awareness
- Preferred text for early readers
- Instruction before “formal” reading
- Role of writing in learning to read
- Invented spelling

# Features/Issues examined

- Role of comprehension instruction
- Reading to children
- Primary forms of practice
- Just plain reading
- Teacher education
- Professional Development
- Assessments
- Special interventions for kids at risk
- Home literacy practices

# Today...

- Emphasis: code or meaning
- How/when phonics
- Role of Phonemic Awareness
- Text
- Before formal reading
- Role of Writing

# Methods preference

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Studies: text: teacher matters  
most: subtext: code gets kids off to the  
fastest start
- Chall:Code over meaning in grades 1 and 2,  
BUT...
  - Good teaching still needed
  - Does not apply to all pupils or schools  
(believe the data)
  - Will not cure all our ills

# Methods preference

- BNR: Not explicitly mentioned, but balance of early phonics and lots of reading/writing is implied
- BtR: Code with reading of meaningful connected text and some decodable text
- PRD: Code, with reading of meaningful connected text and (by implication) decodable text.
- NRP: Code: systematic phonics (method doesn't matter)

# How/when should phonics be taught

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade S:
  - Word study skills should be taught systematically
- Chall:
  - No particular preference
  - First, fast, and out!
- BNR:
  - No one approach singled out:
  - Should be well-designed and concentrated in Grades 1 and 2

# How/when should phonics be taught

- BtR: No one approach singled out, BUT...
  - Onsets/rimes
  - Blending
  - Rules (have heuristic value)
  - Reading words is what counts.
  - Do not skip words, decode them

# How/when should phonics be taught

- PRD: No one approach singled out, BUT...
  - Explicit instruction for sound structures (phonemic awareness), letter sound correspondences, and frequent sight words.
  - Context should not be privileged over visual information

# How/when phonics

- BNR:
  - Strongest effects are early on, in first grade, not much evidence for phonics beyond grade 2
  - In conjunction with a rich curriculum.
  - No preference for analytic vs synthetic.

# Phonemic Awareness

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Studies: term not yet coined but a good predictor
- Chall: Not explicitly dealt with except as a predictor of later achievement (phonic readiness)
- BNR: Implicit in K and phonics recommendations
- BtR: Teach, but in conjunction with l-s instruction
- PRD: Teach, nurture, practice often!!!

# Phonemic Awareness

- NRP:
  - Early on
  - About 18 hours in total
  - In conjunction with LOS instruction

# Preferred text for early readers

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade St: Lots more words lots faster;
  - those programs that introduced a lot had better results.
  - Better balance between HF and regular words.
- Chall: Loosen vocabulary control
  - Lots of folk/fairy tales
  - Re-evaluate grade levels
- BNR: Interesting and comprehensible, with
  - opportunity to apply phonics
- BtR: Meaningful text supplemented by decodable text
  - Fairly easy to read
- PRD: Seems to have been finessed in conclusions (lots of meaningful text),
  - but some decodable text is implied.

# Preferred text for early readers

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- PRD: Seems to have been finessed in conclusions (lots of meaningful text),
  - but some decodable text is implied.
- NRP: No evidence for the use of decodable text

# Instruction before “formal” reading

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Studies: Not much said.
- Chall: Alphabet plus
  - Lots of language and meaning emphasis in K
- BNR: Letters and their sounds plus
  - reading aloud
  - writing
  - oral language
- BtR: Read alouds!!!
  - Talk about text
  - Language experience
  - Phonemic awareness
  - Letter names

# Instruction before “formal” reading

- PDR: Print Awareness
  - Read alouds!!!!
  - Oral language
  - Phonological awareness
  - Print Awareness
  - Alphabetic Principle
  - Form/function relations when it comes to written language
- BNR: Phonemic awareness works with students before kindergarten

# Role of writing in learning to read

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade St: All for it. Note the advantage of ITA and LEA and phonic-linguistic
- Chall: Not emphasized
- BNR: Lots more needed
  - Important in own right and helps reading in many ways
- BtR: Very important, in its own right and to support
  - phonemic awareness (inv spel),
  - phonics, and
  - text understanding

# Role of writing in learning to read

- PRD: Helps with phonemic awareness and phonics
- BNR: Not a part of the scope of inquiry

# Invented spelling

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade St: implicit in ITA advantage for fluency
- Chall: Moot
- BNR: Implied in writing recommendation
- BtR: Important means to discovering
  - phonemic awareness and
  - letter sound knowledge
- PRD: Strongly encouraged (not in conflict with goal of correct spelling) as a means of nurturing
  - phonemic awareness and
  - phonics knowledge

# Invented spelling

- PRD: Strongly encouraged (not in conflict with goal of correct spelling) as a means of nurturing
  - phonemic awareness and
  - phonics knowledge
- Not a part of the scope of inquiry

# Examining trends in practice

# Basals

- Post Chall
  - Increase in challenge
  - Increase in words
  - Increase in phonics
  - Increase in curriculum embedded assessments

# Basals

- Post whole language rise
  - Decrease in phonics
  - Decrease in skills (relegated to the back matter)
  - Increase in literature

# Basals

- Post big phonics movement: 1998 on
  - Add decodable text

Does our knowledge accumulate?  
What have we learned?

# What has not changed over the years?

- Privilege early code-emphasis, but . . .
  - No particular code approach rises to the top
  - Comes surrounded by meaningful text
- Despite an uncertain research base, grudging support for *some* role for decodable text
- Importance of comprehension as a goal
- Strong oral language base

# What has changed?

- Phonemic awareness on an upward trajectory
- Increasing emphasis on and concern for pre-K activity, both at home and in pre-schools
- Steady increase in the role ascribed to writing and invented spelling

# What has changed?

- Through PRD, much richer knowledge base about reading difficulties, both etiology and instruction.
  - diminishing categorical differences
  - championing of similar instructional approaches
- Through PRD steady increase in salience of emergent literacy activities from pre-K through K
  - Oral language/concept (vocabulary) development
  - Print awareness/Concepts about print, including early writing

# What never made it in to any of these documents?

- Social context of learning
- Community

# What remains to be learned?

- Optimal mix of texts (decodable, predictable, high frequency, authentic)
- Optimal amount and difficulty of daily reading

# What remains to be learned?

- Phonics: What would it look like to teach phonics as a conceptual “system” rather than a collection of bits of information? What savings could be accrued?
- Grouping
- Balance between reading and other language arts

The end

# Bottom line

- Is PRD a perfect report? NO!
- Failure to ground their work historically
- Occasional over-interpretation of evidence

# Bottom line

- Is PRD a useful report? YES!
- Reminds us of things we have known but seem easily to forget
- Extends the upward trajectory for particular initiatives: PA, IS, Wr
- Brings us some new knowledge: RD

# Bottom line

- A wonderful YES, . . . BUT . . .
- Lots of detail is left up for grabs
- There is lots for all of us to do in filling in those crucial details called instruction.

# Bottom Line

- Read a lot!
- Write a lot!
- Talk a lot!
- Get a little help (in the form of skills infrastructure) from your friends!

# Role of comprehension instruction

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade St: not addressed directly
  - Implicit in outcomes
- Chall: Not too much to deal with in early readers
  - Very important later on
- BNR: More time to direct instruction in comprehension;
  - Discussion also important

# Role of comprehension instruction

- BtR: Little is said, little is implied,
  - but comprehension as a goal is central
  - conceptual development is strongly implied
- PRD: Direct instruction important from the outset,
  - but early on do it with read-aloud books
  - Emphasize conceptual knowledge
- BNR: Very important
  - Strategies
  - Vocabulary

# Reading to children

- Chall: not discussed (or not yet found)
- BNR: Parents need to do it frequently
- BtR: Parents and teachers should nurture active involvement
- PRD: Absolutely pivotal role in Pre-K and K.

# Primary forms of practice

- Chall: Still looking
- BNR: Less time in workbooks,
  - more time reading and writing
- BtR: Read a lot
  - Workbooks OK if well-designed with clear purpose
- PRD: Daily practice with easy texts plus some exposure to challenging texts
  - No position on workbooks

# Just plain reading

- Chall: Still looking
- BNR: Dramatic increases needed
  - Schools need better libraries
- BtR: Very important, including independent reading, practice reading (e.g., repeated reading, pairs, etc)
- PRD: Critical! both easy reading to consolidate skills and challenging reading to promote new learning

# Teacher education

- Chall: Still looking
- BNR: Five years and lots more content
- BtR: Still looking
- PRD: LOTS of knowledge-based requirements for pre-service (n = 14)

# Professional Development

- Chall: Yes, program specific
- BNR: Focus on better induction programs
- BtR: Still looking
- PRD: Life-long support for personal professional development

# Assessment

- Chall: Important because they can give teachers more freedom in using methods and materials (outcome accountability)
  - Single component tests
    - alphabetic principle
    - comprehension
    - critical reading
    - appreciation
  - Absolute, not relative, standards for cross-time comparisons

# Assessment

- BNR: More comprehensive assessments needed
  - Fluency
  - Summarize and evaluate text
  - Amount of reading and writing
- BtR: Still looking
- PRD: Need to conduct a lot of validity research on current and future tools.

# Special interventions for children at-risk

- Chall: Essential problems lie in code-knowledge, not comprehension
  - Best remedial strategies are code-based (with words controlled for spelling “regularity”).
- BNR: Not addressed, except in Jeanne Chall’s afterword.

# Special interventions for children at-risk

- BtR: RR mentioned but topic not highlighted
- PRD: High on those programs that use highly trained professional tutors.
  - Limited role for volunteers (read to, talk to)
  - Effective elements: Same as for garden-variety readers

# Home literacy practices

- Chall: Still searching
- BNR: Read aloud and discuss stories
  - Informal letter and word learning
- BtR: No explicit recommendations, but
  - lots of reading aloud and language play is implied
- PRD: Read alouds
  - Language activities

