

3-Minute Introduction to the Science of Reading

1. Reading isn't natural

No one is born to read. Reading isn't a natural skill like talking or walking. Reading doesn't happen by osmosis, from being read to, or from being in a literacy rich environment. So if a student seems to be struggling, we can't "wait and see" and there is no such thing as giving a student "the gift of time" If we wait, some kids don't get it and if they don't have it by end of 1st grade they don't tend to catch up even with intervention. This means directly teaching reading skills, rather than taking the child's lead will be more effective.

2. Everyone learns to read in this same way

There aren't multiple ways to learn to read, so we don't need to match our approach to student preferences or learning styles. All skilled readers have phonics skills and age appropriate language comprehension

3. There is a known path or reading circuit in the brains of skilled readers

The reading pathway relies on connecting speech sounds to print and to the meaning of words. Struggling readers and non-readers don't have these connections and actually use the wrong side of their brain when they read. Instruction can prevent or correct this – You can strengthen these pathways by basing reading instruction in language and reinforcing the speech to print connection rather than relying on rote memorization, visual features of printed words, or guessing based on context or pictures.

4. Some students acquire these circuits or pathways more easily, others need lots of repetition to create these pathways (but it is the same pathway).

Some students will require careful Deliberate distributed and cumulative practice. Some students have brains that make learning to read very difficult, but with the right instruction even students with dyslexia can learn to read.

5. All students benefit from explicit and systematic instruction in the skills that form the reading pathway

Students living in poverty, English Learners, students with disabilities, even top students, all ages K-6

6. Prevention is easier and cheaper than intervention

There are known indicators of reading that can be assessed at the beginning of k – Teaching these skills to kids who don't have them can change the course of their lives.

Research can't answer all questions about reading. But there are things each of us are doing that aren't supported by research

There are things we can do today that won't cost anything, but could make a significant difference in whether or not our students learn to read. Let's learn together.