

The National Reading Panel Report

Major points from the report of the *National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction, 2000*.

- Phonemic awareness (PA) refers to the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words. To be clear, phonemic awareness instruction is not synonymous with phonics instruction that entails teaching students how to use grapheme-phoneme correspondences to decode or spell words.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is effective in teaching children to attend to and manipulate speech sounds in words. PA can be taught and is effective under a variety of teaching conditions with a variety of learners.
- Findings show that teaching children to manipulate the sounds in language helps them learn to read.
- PA instruction produced positive effects on both word reading and pseudoword reading, indicating that it helps children decode novel words as well as remember how to read familiar words.

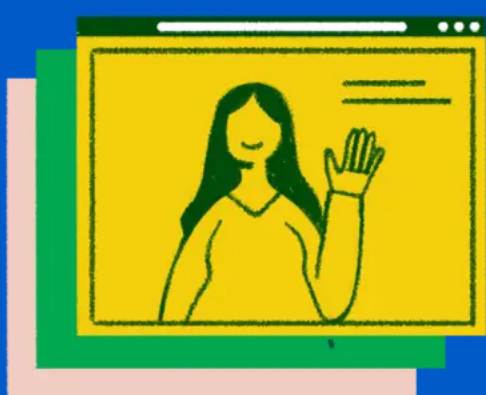
- PA instruction helped all types of children improve their reading, including normally developing readers, children at risk for future reading problems, disabled readers, preschoolers, kindergartners, 1st graders, children in 2nd through 6th grades (most of whom were disabled readers), children across various SES levels, and children learning to read in English as well as other languages.
- PA instruction is more effective when it makes explicit how children are to apply PA skills in reading and writing.
- PA instruction does not need to consume long periods of time. Acquiring PA skills is a means rather than an end.
- PA was found to help most children learn to read and spell, and its effects lasted well beyond training.
- Phonemic Awareness was identified as one of the five components of effective reading instruction.

English Language Learners

Research and readings regarding implications for practice in developing phonological/phonemic awareness in Spanish (L1) instruction:

- Several investigators have found Spanish phonological awareness to be a strong predictor of reading (*Bravo-Valdivieso, 1995; Carrillo, 1994; Durgunoglu et al., 1993*). (*Dickinson, McCabe, Clark-Chiarelo and Wolf, 2004*)
- Because of its salience in Spanish, the syllable appears to be a significant unit of processing for Spanish speakers. For instance, there is evidence that Spanish-speaking adults compute syllables while processing written words (*Jimenez and Garcia, 1995*). Children learning to write in Spanish tend to write one letter per syllable during early stages of writing development (*Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982*). (*Gorman and Gillam, 2003*)
- Spanish-speaking children can identify syllables prior to identifying phonemes. (*Deton, Hashbrouck, Weaver, and Riccio, 2000*)
- The syllable forms the cornerstone in teaching children to begin to de-code words in Spanish. (*Ferreiro, Pellicer, Rodríguez, Silva, and Vernon, 1994*)
- Research in the teaching of reading in Mexico, (*Escamilla, 1999; Ferreiro, Pellicer, Rodríguez, Silva, and Vernon, 1994*) also suggests that vowels are best taught before consonants in beginning reading programs. (*Escamilla, 2000*)
- Research on Spanish-speaking children (*Escamilla, Andrade, Basurto and Ruiz, 1996; Escamilla and Coady, 2000*) indicates that Spanish-speaking children also use patterns as they develop as readers and writers. (*Escamilla, 2000*)
- This is not to dismiss the importance of breaking up speech into its minimal elements (phonemes) in Spanish. As a matter of fact, phonemic awareness in Spanish is a predictor of the mastery of the alphabetic coding. It is not a matter of teaching children to make a distinction, but of making them conscious of a distinction they already know. The natural developmental process in Spanish begins with sensitivity to syllables, then the onset and rime within a syllable, and finally to individual phonemes. It is important to understand that we must introduce both frameworks for bilingual students. However, the issue is not whether to teach students onset and rime – they have to master both frameworks. The issue is knowing when to introduce the second (L2) framework. (*quoted from page 3, Lectura en Español y Estrategias con Recursos, Materiales, Apoyo y Sugerencias: An Extension of the Texas Teacher Reading Academy for the Bilingual Classroom, Texas Education Agency, 2006*)
- For alphabetical languages such as English and Spanish, the ability to manipulate individual sound units occurs at the lexical and sub-lexical level. Children who have phonological skills are able to segment words into syllables, onset-rimes, and phonemes. (*Pang and Kamil, 2004*)
- As in English, Spanish speakers with reading disabilities consistently display poorer phonological awareness skills and use a phonological strategy (sounding out) less often than their non-disabled peers. (*Jimenez, 1997*)

- Children in a sequential bilingual context, who have already learned the cue system of their first language (L1), may apply those cues to their second language (L2), in a process known as forward transfer. Based upon this concept, we might also expect sequential bilingual children to transfer their phonological awareness skills from L1 to L2. This is exactly what several studies have indicated (*Cisero and Royer, 1995; Durgunoglu et al., 1993; Gottardo, 2002; Quiroga, Lemos-Britton, Mostafapour, Abbott, and Berninger, 2002*). In fact, Durgunoglu and colleagues (1993) found that the best predictors of literacy development in both Spanish and English for native Spanish-speaking children were their phonological awareness and their word recognition skills in Spanish. As a result, the investigators suggested that building children's phonological awareness in L1 would transfer and help improve their reading in English. (*Gorman and Gillam, 2003*)
- Rhyming was correlated with reading level in Kindergarten, but not in first grade. (*Carillo, 1994*)
- Several studies have indicated that initial phoneme matching is indicative of Spanish reading ability for a wide age range (*Carillo, 1994; Cisero and Royer, 1995; Durgunoglu et al., 1993*). (*Gorman and Gillam, 2003*)
- [From findings on the Transfer of Skills from Spanish to English: A Study of Young Learners, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.]The results indicated that Spanish phonemic awareness, Spanish letter identification, and Spanish word reading were reliable predictors of performance on parallel tasks in English at the end of third and fourth grades. The effect of Spanish phonemic awareness on English phonemic awareness emerged for all students. (*August, Calderón and Carlo, 2002*).
- Studies found evidence of cross-linguistic transfer of phonological awareness skills among kindergarten and first-grade English- and Spanish-speaking students. Data indicated a developmental progression from simpler to more complex skills – that is, from syllable awareness to onset-rime awareness to phonemic awareness. (*Cisero and Royer, 1995*)
- Rhyming among Spanish speakers seems to develop prior to literacy acquisition in phonological and phonemic awareness. However, conscious manipulation of syllables appears to be difficult for non-readers. Spanish-speaking students develop sensitivity to a) syllables, b) onset, c) rhymes, and finally, d) individual phonemes. (*Brice and Brice, 2007*)
- Native-language and English phonemic awareness skills contribute to English reading comprehension. (*Carlisle, Beeman, Davis, and Spharim, 1999*)
- Current research supports the notion that identifying initial sounds, final sounds, and rhyme seem to relate to reading fluency in Spanish, and that these skills transfer to reading fluency in English. Hence, some phonological and phonemic awareness tasks can transfer between Spanish and English, indicating that knowledge in Spanish is useful in acquiring English reading skills. (*Brice and Brice, 2007*)
- Literacy in a child's native language establishes a knowledge, concept and skills base that transfers from native language reading to reading in a second language (*Collier and Thomas, 1992; Cummins, 1989; Escamilla, 1987; Modiano, 1968; Rodriguez, 1988*). Moreover, it has been established that, for Spanish-speaking children, there is a high and positive correlation between learning to read in Spanish and subsequent reading achievement in English (*Collier and Thomas, 1995; Greene, 1998; Krashen and Biber, 1987; Leshner-Madrid and Garcia, 1985; Ramirez, Yuen and Ramy, 1991*). (*Escamilla, 2000*)



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