

Balanced Literacy vs. Science of Reading

Balanced Literacy

- Phonemic awareness covered haphazardly or not at all.
- Full range of sound-letter correspondences assumed to be learned naturally; phonetic patterns covered un-systematically and in context.
- Memorization of Dolch/Fry (i.e., "sight") words, with little or no attention to their phonetic components.
- Focus on using first/last letters; heavy reliance on context clues, including pictures.
- Misread words ignored if they do not seriously interfere with comprehension.
- Use of repetitive and leveled readers that contain unlearned phonetic patterns and encourage guessing; guided reading groups.
- Little or no attention to fluency.
- Lots of class time devoted to independent reading.

Science of Reading

- Phonemic awareness emphasized as a pre-reading skill.
- Explicit, systematic instruction on the full range of sound-letter correspondences, beginning with simple patterns and proceeding to more complex ones.
- High-frequency words taught according to phonetic patterns; irregular words analyzed for their phonetic/non-phonetic elements.
- Focus on on all letters/sounds in a word; context clues used only to help identify highly irregular words or clarify meaning.
- Misread words promptly corrected, with explicit instruction on how to sound them out.
- Use of decodable readers that contain only vocabulary with already-learned phonetic patterns.
- Fluency consistently addressed.
- Very little class time devoted to independent reading.