


ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



PART 2


Letter Names, Sounds, or Both?

Evidence-based Approaches for Alphabet Instruction

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Agenda



PART 2 PART 1

- A** Research findings on letter learning
- B** Characteristics of letters that may facilitate learning
- C** Research findings on alphabet instruction
- D** Evidence-based strategies for alphabet instruction

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Stages of Learning

Young children learn letter names and sounds in stages:

Acquisition

Maintenance

Generalization

Slow and Halting


Rate Improving

Better Automaticity

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Letter Learning Outcomes

- Letter name knowledge
- Letter sound knowledge
- Letter name fluency
- Letter sound fluency
- Letter writing



(Piasta, Petscher, & Justice, 2012)


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Letter Learning at Home

A study looking at letter “talk” at home:

- More of a focus on letters in words
- Less of a focus on letter sounds

(Robins, Treiman, & Rosales, 2014)




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Teaching Letter Knowledge

A comparison of alphabet instruction in early childhood curricula shows:

- Some do not make mention of explicit instruction of letters
- Instruction in ABC order
- Instruction based on letter frequency
- Instruction in letter sound only
- Instruction in lowercase letters

(Justice et al., 2006; Piasta & Wagner, 2010b)




A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Teaching Letter Knowledge

Letter of the week instruction is based on tradition

- It takes 26 weeks for to cover the alphabet.
- Some letters are easier to learn than others.
- Some children already know some letters.
- Repetition and practice are required for learning.

(Justice et al., 2006)



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Meta-Analysis of Alphabet Learning and Instruction

- Instruction in alphabet knowledge has modest effect sizes.
- Letter-name instruction led to significant impacts on letter-sound knowledge.
- Letter-sound (only) instruction led to letter-sound learning (not letter-name learning).
- Instruction in greater duration was more effective.
- Small groups (compared to 1:1 tutoring) was more effective.

(Piasta & Wagner, 2010a)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Meta-Analysis of Alphabet Learning and Instruction

Why only modest effect sizes?

Alphabet learning may require significant amounts of rote memorization and repeated practice.

Letter-name and sound instruction were embedded in a broader literacy program.

Children have opportunities to learn about letters in other settings.

This may reflect our current ability to teach alphabet knowledge in the early literacy period.

(Piasta & Wagner, 2010a)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Instructional Guidance

“Our findings are contrary to findings that letter name instruction is unimportant or, worse, detrimental for children’s letter sound acquisition.... Such beliefs have prompted approaches for teaching early literacy that disregard letter names altogether (e.g. Gurney, 1999. Jolly Learning, n.d.; Montessori & Gutek, 2004).”

Letter name learning, when combined with sound instruction may causally impact students’ letter sound acquisition.


(Piasta & Wagner, 2010b)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Strategies for Teaching Alphabet Knowledge

1. Explicit lesson format includes teacher modeling and guided practice for:
2. Upper- and lower-case letter name identification
3. Letter sound identification
4. Recognizing the letter in text
5. Producing the letter form
6. **Articulation production**


(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)




A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Letter Instruction Components

- Name
- Shape (uppercase/lowercase)
- Sound
- Target word
- Mouth shape
- Writing it

A a /ă/ apple 

B b /b/ bus 

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Key Words for Vowels

Vowels				
Letter	Sound	Key Word	Sound	Key Word
A a	/ă/		/ā/	
E e	/ĕ/		/ē/	
I i	/ĭ/		/ī/	
O o	/ŏ/		/ō/	
U u	/ŭ/		/ū/	

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Mouth Placement for Consonant Sounds

Place these consonants in the appropriate Mouth Place:
 b, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z
 and sh, zh, ch, th, th, ng, wh

Which consonant letters are missing? c, q, x

Consonants	
Mouth Place	Sounds
Lips Together	
Teeth on Lip	
Tongue between Teeth	
Tongue behind Teeth	
Tongue on Roof of Mouth	
Back of Mouth	
Way in Back of Mouth	

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Key Words for Consonants

Lips Together					Teeth on Lip		Between Teeth		
Sound	/b/	/p/	/m/	/w/	/wh/	/f/	/v/	/th/	/th/
Key									
Word									
Letter	b	p	m	w	?	f, ph	v	th	th


Tongue Behind Teeth					Tongue on Roof of Mouth							
Sound	/d/	/t/	/n/	/s/	/z/	/l/	/sh/	/zh/	/ch/	/j/	/y/	/r/
Key												
Word												
Letter	d	t	n	s, c	z, s	l	sh	z	ch, j, g	y	r	

Back of Mouth			Way Back	
Sound	/k/	/g/	/ng/	/h/
Key				
Word				
Letter	c, k	g	ng	h

Which sounds are not taught:
 - in Kindergarten?
 - In Grade 1?

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Consider these cycles:



- Own name advantage**
 - Learning advantage for initial letter in children's names
 - Highly motivating and responsive to developmental needs
- Alphabet order advantage**
 - Learning advantage for alphabet sequence
 - Serial effects with advantage for beginning and ending

(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Classroom Activity: ABC Eye Charts


Make a chart of the alphabet letters in the same pattern as the Alphabet Song. Use it as a song card or in the housekeeping center of your classroom as an "eye" chart.

ABC Eye Chart	abc Eye Chart	Aa Bb Cc Eye Chart
A B C D	a b c d	Aa Bb Cc Dd
E F G	e f g	Ee Ff Gg
H I J K	h i j k	Hh Ii Jj Kk
L M N O P	l m n o p	Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp
Q R S	q r s	Qq Rr Ss
T U V	t u v	Tt Uu Vv
W X	w x	Ww Xx
Y Z	y z	Yy Zz

(Paulson et al. 2001)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Consider these cycles:



- Letter name-sound relationship**
 - Learning advantage for letters with sound connection and for letters with single sound
 - May spend less time on letters with sound connections and more on more difficult letters

Which letters do not have a letter-sound connection?


(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Consider these cycles:

4. Letter frequency

- Learning advantage for environmental exposure
- Teaches focus on letters in text



5. Consonant acquisition order

- Learning advantage of developmental speech sound acquisition
- Teaches earlier developed sounds before later developing sounds

Which speech sounds develop earlier?
Which speech sounds develop later?

(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)


Magic Mirror

Have the children create a “magic mirror” and then use it to find words in the environment. They can write the words on pieces of paper and then make a word book.



Younger children may use their mirror to find the target concept that is being taught, such as colors, numbers, letters, animals, etc.

(Paulson et al., 2001)



Magic Mirror Song Card

MIRROR, MIRROR,
LEAD THE WAY.
FIND THE WORD
THAT I SAY.


“ _____ ”

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Consider these cycles:

6. Distinctive visual features in writing

- Learning advantage based on distinctive features in written letter form
- Teaching emphasizes distinctive features between similar letters

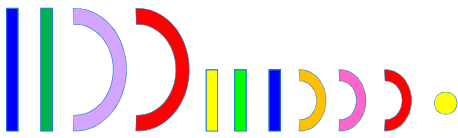


(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z


Make Foam Letter Forms

- Cut these shapes out of sturdy material (foam, thin wood, or cardboard).
- Use these shapes to create letters of the alphabet.
- One set allows you to build uppercase and lowercase letters.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Preliminary Results



Letter per day instruction in 9 to 12 minute lessons


- 5 weeks to present 26 letter names and sounds
- 7 possible distributed review cycles throughout the school year

Instructional time can focus more efficiently on letter names and sounds that are more difficult to learn.

Results showed a significant decrease in the number of kindergarteners benchmarked at-risk.

(Jones, Clark & Reutzel, 2012)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z



What do we really know?

Letter-name knowledge precedes letter sounds knowledge – and both are important.

There are WIDE developmental ranges and a narrow window of development.

Many characteristics influence letter learning.

Explicit instruction has larger effect sizes than embedded instruction.

Alphabet learning most likely requires significant amounts of rote memorization and repeated practice.

Multi-component instruction is effective.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

What squared up?


What's going around?

3 key points?

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Questions and comments?

Thank you



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