



## AFT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATION COURSE OVERVIEW

### Course: Beginning Reading Instruction

#### Summary

Beginning Reading Instruction (BRI) is an ER&D module that focuses on how children learn to read and the best ways to teach beginning reading from kindergarten to the end of the primary grades. Because the course contains considerable information on how students develop basic decoding skills, it is also useful for teachers and support staff working with older students who are still having difficulty with decoding and fluency. The course presents a synthesis of the research consensus for beginning reading instruction, and it provides the most effective instructional strategies -- aligned to that research -- to help students develop phonemic awareness, knowledge of the alphabetic system, phonics/decoding skills, print awareness, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

The Beginning Reading Instruction course was developed for AFT by reading researchers Isabel Beck and Rebecca Hamilton.

#### Course Content

##### *Research and Historical Context*

For too long, educators and policymakers have debated about what effective beginning instruction entailed and how reading acquisition in young children occurred. As a result, teachers and support staff have been buffeted by numerous competing and often contradictory fads and instructional mandates. While it may be helpful to be aware that those debates occurred and concomitant confusion resulted, the context for this course is set by presenting information about the research consensus reflected in such works as Marilyn Adam's *Beginning to Read*; the National Research Council report *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*; and the report of the National Reading Panel -- and codified in the Reading First section of the 2001 reauthorization of ESEA.

##### *The Reading Process*

In this section of the course, participants learn what the reading process for young children entails. Through simulation and reflection, participants gain heightened understanding of what it takes to become a proficient reader, the characteristics of proficient and struggling readers, and what teachers and support staff need to know and be able to do to teach beginning readers.

##### *Phonemic Awareness*

Phonemic awareness is a foundational skill to reading acquisition. Participants learn about the alphabetic principle; learn and practice articulating phonemes; and acquire and implement strategies to enhance students' ability to identify, segment and manipulate phonemes.

### ***Phonics***

This section focuses on letter-sound correspondences, cumulative blending, and those strategies most effective in enhancing beginning readers' decoding skills and fluent word level reading. Research and strategies relating to decoding multi-syllabic words also are presented. The role of context in reading is explained and illustrated. Substantial practice of each of these components is provided.

### ***Fluency***

Participants learn why fluency is important, the characteristics of fluent reading, and how to teach fluency. Participants role play various fluency strategies.

### ***Vocabulary***

Vocabulary development is critical to text comprehension. This section focuses on how participants can be strategic in determining what words to teach and how, so that students come to "own" new words and increase the breadth and depth of their vocabulary.

### ***Comprehension***

Comprehension is the reason for reading, and it results, in part, from the mastery and integration of the skills and strategies detailed in the previous components. In addition, proficient readers are active, strategic readers. In this section, participants learn comprehension strategies that they can teach their students to enhance students' text comprehension. Among the strategies are developing and using Story Maps and during-reading queries.

### **Key Researchers**

**Research and Historical Context:** Chall; Moats; Adams; Seymour & Elder; Beck; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson; Goodman; Snow, Burns & Griffin; Snowling; Stanovich; Juel; Diederich; Jorn & Share

**The Reading Process:** Stanovich; Perfetti; Scarborough; Goodman; Smith; Just & Carpenter; Juel; Kiss & Savage

**Phonemic Awareness:** Adams; Cunningham, A; Moats; Foorman; Lundberg, Frost, & Petersen; Blachman, Ball, Black & Tangel; Lindamood; Yopp, H; Yopp, R; Stanovich; Beeler; Wagner & Torgeson; Perfetti, Beck, Bell & Hughes

**Phonics and Context:** Beck; Gough, Alfred & Holley-Wilcox; Nicholson; Goodman; Bruck; Perfetti, Goldman & Hogabaum; Glass & Glass

**Fluency:** Stanovich; Cunningham, A; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson; Samuels

**Vocabulary Instruction:** Beck; Biemiller; Beck, McKeown & Kucan; Stahl; Hart & Risley; Nagy, Herman & Anderson; Dole; Swanborn & Gloppe

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