
Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding research on the effectiveness of teaching syllabication in remedial reading class at the high school level. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource.

Question: *Do you know of any research on the effectiveness of teaching syllabication in remedial reading class at the high school level?*

Key words and search strings used in the search: *syllable types AND reading intervention AND high school; graphosyllabic analysis; phonics instruction AND syllable types AND high school intervention; multisyllabic word reading strategies*

Search databases and websites:

1. ERIC: <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
2. JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>
3. Google Scholar: www.google.com/scholar
4. Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>
5. What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Citations Retrieved: (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):

Archer, A. L., Gleason, M. M., & Vachon, V. L. (2003). Decoding and fluency: Foundation skills for Struggling Readers. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(2), 89-101. doi: 10.2307/1593592

Abstract/Summary: A large number of secondary students read between the 2.5 and the 5.0 grade level. What separates many of these students from their higher performing peers is their inability to read multisyllabic words and to read fluently. These students need instruction in decoding long words using one of three approaches: reading segmented words part by part, decoding different syllable types, or using a flexible strategy for reading long words. These students also need sufficient reading practice to increase their reading rates. This practice might include oral guided reading, choral reading, partner reading, and/or repeated reading activities. The authors suggest that significant gains in reading are more likely to occur when teachers

implement research-validated programs that have a well-designed sequence, provide systematic instruction to students, and furnish adequate practice.

Bhattacharya, A., & Ehri, L. C. (2004). Graphosyllabic analysis helps adolescent struggling readers read and spell words. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37, 331–348.
doi:10.1177/00222194040370040501

Abstract/Summary: Adolescents with word-reading skills below grade level were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. Those receiving interventions practiced reading 100 multisyllabic words, either by analyzing graphosyllabic units in the words or by reading the words as unanalyzed wholes. The third group received no special instruction. Posttests revealed that graphosyllabic instruction helped students to decode novel words, remember how to read words with practice, and remember the spellings of words when compared to controls. In contrast, whole-word instruction yielded no benefit on transfer tasks compared to controls. Effects were observed primarily among adolescents reading at a third-grade-equivalent level and less so at a fourth- and fifth-grade-equivalent level. Results are consistent with a connectionist view of word learning and indicate the importance of providing struggling readers with instruction and practice in how to fully analyze the graphosyllabic constituents of words.

Joseph, L. M., & Schisler, R. (2009). Should adolescents go back to the basics? A review of teaching word reading skills to middle and high school students. *Remedial and Special Education*, 30(3), 131-147. doi: 10.1177/0741932508315646

Abstract/Summary: The purpose of this review was to explore the effectiveness of teaching basic reading skills to adolescents. Studies that were published in the past 20 years from 1986 to 2006 were selected and reviewed on the basis of specific criteria for inclusion. Results indicated that there were 23 studies that met the criteria. Findings revealed that various programs and methods designed to teach basic reading skills were implemented with adolescents to determine their effectiveness on word identification, fluency, and comprehension skills. An analysis revealed an overall strong effect of teaching basic reading skills on adolescents' reading achievement performance, particularly on their fluency performance. Limitations and directions for future research are described as well as implications for secondary educators. (Contains 1 table.)

Scammacca, N., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., Edmonds, M., Wexler, J., Reutebuch, C. K., & Torgesen, J. K. (2007). Interventions for adolescent struggling readers: A meta-analysis with implications for practice. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction. Retrieved from

http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/coi_struggling_readers.pdf

Abstract/Summary: This meta-analysis offers decision-makers research-based guidance for intervening with adolescent struggling readers. The authors outline major implications for practice: (1) Adolescence is not too late to intervene. Interventions do benefit older students; (2) Older students with reading difficulties benefit from interventions focused at both the word and the text level; (3) Older students with reading difficulties benefit from improved knowledge of word meanings and concepts; (4) Word-study interventions are appropriate for older students struggling at the word level; (5) Teachers can provide interventions that are associated with positive effects; (6) Teaching comprehension strategies to older students with reading difficulties is beneficial; (7) Older readers' average gains in reading comprehension are somewhat smaller than those in other reading and reading-related areas studied; (8) Older students with learning disabilities (LD) benefit from reading intervention when it is appropriately focused; and (9) To learn more about instructional conditions that could close the reading gap for struggling readers, individuals will need studies that provide instruction over longer periods of time and assess outcomes with measures more like those schools use to monitor reading progress of all students. This report summarizes aspects of recent research on reading instruction for adolescent struggling readers. It both synthesizes research findings to determine the relative effectiveness of interventions for struggling older readers and outlines the implications of these findings for practice. Its purpose is to advance the knowledge of technical assistance providers working with state departments of education and local education agencies concerning reading-related issues for students with reading difficulties and learning disabilities (LD). While the authors' methods and general findings are described, they are presented in terms of their impact on practice and policy. Specific suggestions for implementing these and other research findings are provided in an accompanying practice brief (ED521836). This report is intended primarily for technical assistance providers at Regional Comprehensive Centers for their use in crafting evidence-based guidance for states and local educational agencies. (Contains 5 tables and 1 footnote and lists 14 resources.) [For related reports, see "Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers: A Practice Brief" (ED521836) and "Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers: Professional Development Module. Second Edition. Facilitator's Guide." (ED521838).]

Referrals

Organizations:

- Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at The University of Texas at Austin: <http://www.texasreading.org>
- Florida Center for Reading Research: <http://www.fcrr.org/>
- Center on Instruction: www.centeroninstruction.org

Federally Funded Resources:

- Institute of Education Sciences (IES), public search engine available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/>

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- What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

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