

Leveled Reading, Leveled Lives

How Students' Reading Achievement Has Been Held Back and What We Can Do About It
by Timothy Shanahan

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Introduction

The Introduction explains the problem that “instructional level teaching” poses for children and for American literacy achievement. This bibliography includes all the sources directly referred to in the Introduction.

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1 provides a historical explanation of how leveled reading became the most widely used approach to teaching reading in the United States. This analysis divides American educational history into five eras, and the bibliography entries below are divided in the same way. This bibliography includes both resources directly referenced along with other resources that made a valuable contribution.

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Chapter 2

Chapter 2 explains how various theories have been misused to defend the instructional level and reveals how instructional level theory is incommensurate with readiness theory, frustration theory, high accuracy learning, and Vygotsky's zone of proximal development.

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Chapter 3

This chapter reviews the empirical research that has directly evaluated the impact of instructional level text placement on learning to read.

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Chapter 4

This chapter explains why teaching students with instructional level texts does not advantage literacy learning. For it to work, teachers must identify students' reading levels, the levels assigned to books must be accurate, and group instruction must provide a learning advantage. None of these are attainable.

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Chapter 5

This chapter provides an alternative to instructional level theory.

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Chapter 6

This chapter explores the text needs of beginning readers, explaining why this stage of learning is an exception to the idea of teaching students with challenging text. The need to develop decoding ability benefits more from a combination of decodable text and controlled vocabulary texts. Additionally, it describes how the decoding and word reading demands of challenging text can be addressed instructionally.

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Chapter 7

This chapter describes many of the ways that teachers can scaffold the comprehension of challenging texts. It provides information about instructional approaches that can be used to scaffold the comprehension of the vocabulary, syntax, cohesion, and structure of a text, along with comprehension strategies, and prior knowledge supports.

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Chapter 8

Chapter 8 explores the relationships among text difficulty, motivation and other affective and behavioral variables. It provides guidance in how to maintain student motivation and attention when teaching with challenging text.

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Chapter 9

Chapter 9 summarizes the thesis and supporting arguments of the text and provides additional instructional guidance for teaching with challenging text.

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