

Principles to help you Fact Check (evaluate articles about learning and literacy)

The Foundation Committee has developed the following set of principles to help you evaluate information about learning and literacy.

Be wary of articles that:	Look for articles that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest that teachers and teacher education are <i>solely</i> responsible for any difficulties a child or children might be experiencing in learning to be literate. Two of the greatest causes of reading difficulty are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. poverty ii. the singular adoption of commercial programs designed to comply with high-stakes testing • Misrepresent and discredit balanced literacy pedagogies and approaches • Portray teachers as lacking in expertise, skills and knowledge • Advocate the simplicity of a one-size-fits-all commercial program as a necessary approach for all children • Conflate the specific needs of a group of learners with the whole population • Privilege the teaching of phonics in the teaching of reading over other meaning-making skills and strategies • Promote the reading of contrived texts with contrived vocabulary and sentence structure <i>before</i> the reading of authentic, quality literature. Such contrived texts ignore the importance of meaning-making. • Deny that companies lobbying to implement specific literacy programs do not make commercial gain from selling these programs to schools, teachers and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent literacy as a meaning-making process • Respect the professionalism of the teaching profession • Present the multiple and complex factors that can contribute to children experiencing difficulties with learning to be literate. For example, poverty and disadvantage can be a major factor • Promote the understanding that teachers’ work needs to be adapted to meet the individual literacy learning needs of every child in their care rather than a lock-step recipe approach • Consider the many strategies that are necessary for the ongoing development of literacy across the curriculum rather than over-emphasise a few • Understand that literacy learners will need to focus on different knowledges and skills at different times as they continue to develop their literacies • Emphasise the reading of quality imaginative literature from the beginning of a child’s literacy journey • Discuss different kinds of research methodologies to answer different kinds of research questions about literacy learning. See, for example, Duke (2011) • Provide a well-rounded analysis of important national report and survey findings.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privilege the research of some cognitive scientists when many have never been involved in teaching children to read • Ignore the knowledge and experience of professional qualified educators • Misrepresent findings from national reports and surveys • Advocate more high stakes testing • Do not acknowledge that tests often disadvantage EALD (English as an additional language or dialect) learners as well as many children in vulnerable or at-risk situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for using a range of authentic assessment strategies that do not discriminate against children learning English as an additional language or those who are at risk or facing trauma in their lives.
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Adapted from:

<https://radicalscholarship.wordpress.com/2019/06/10/checklist-media-coverage-of-the-science-of-reading/>

OTHER REFERENCES

Bracey, G. (2006). *Reading educational research: How to avoid getting statistically snookered*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Duke, N. & Martin, N. (2011). Ten things every literacy educator should know about research. *The Reading Teacher* Vol. 65 Issue 1 pp. 9–22.

Gabriel, R. (2020). *The future of the science of reading*. *The Reading Teacher* Vol. 74 No. 1 July/August 2020

Thomas, P. (2020). *How to end the Reading War and serve the literacy needs of all students: A primer for parents, policy makers, and people who care*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.