TOE BY TOE: AN EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION FOR STRUGGLING READER

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Reading is a process of getting meaning from printed page. It offers an effective access to information, aspirations and happenings of both past and present. Hence, we can expand our horizon from home, country and the world through reading.

Skills in reading is a fundamental factor which will enable and inspire the child to succeed in school and later on his daily life. However, the inability to read often result to failure. The challenge now is how can a teacher halt failure caused by inability to read? What is an effective intervention for non-readers?

Researches around the world strongly suggest to take into consideration three factors in teaching reading in order to eradicate non-readers. These are teaching phonics systematically, identification of whole word and utilization of contextual cues. The said three factors are being utilized in Toe by Toe Intervention. Toe by Toe Intervention is a synthetic phonics program highly structured one that teach phonics skills. Keda Cowling, a teacher in the UK developed this intervention. It uses repetition in order for the learners to decode easily. Just like the ads being repeatedly aired over the television. The sounds of the English alphabet are mastered by the learners. Through this, common pattern is being built gradually followed by words then finally sentences. This is applied to non-readers from age 6 and up. The approach is one on one instruction for 20 minutes daily. There is an emphasis in recording progress of the learners.

Study showed that in 2006, the students of Linwood College who completed Toe by Toe intervention had great improvement in terms of their reading ages. Similar to a
research study conducted to 24 secondary pupils. Half of them were under control group and the other half underwent experimental. Toe by Toe was utilized to the latter one. They underwent intervention for 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week for the period of 3 months. The results were definitive.

The experimental group made average gains of 3 ½ years while the control group made average gains of 5 months (McKay and Cowling, 2004)

In the same year McKay (2006) utilized the Toe by Toe intervention to 91 primary non-readers in 32 schools in Scotland. For the 6-7 months duration of intervention program, gigantic progress was evident.

Toe by Toe intervention is effective indeed. I for one can attest to it. I have been utilizing this for more than a decade now, that is why non-reader has no room in my classroom. And I am strongly suggesting to my co-educators to try to utilize it and experienced a stress-free non-reader.

References:

Judy Hutchison, Linwood College
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National Educational Psychological Service

McKay and Cowling, 2004