

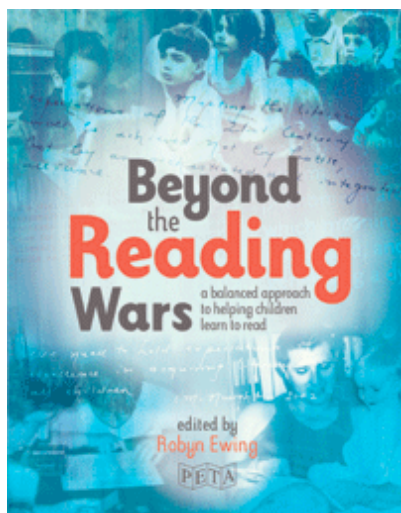


PRIMARY ENGLISH TEACHING ASSOCIATION

This book will prove useful for teachers and parents of primary children struggling to understand the often bitter debate related to the teaching of reading – and, more specifically, the merits or disadvantages of using so-called ‘whole language’ versus ‘phonics’ methods to help children learn to read. The authors explore the history and latest research about reading process and pedagogy, and share their experience and knowledge about processes of learning to read, along with an extensive range of strategies and practical teaching tips and insights. This book demonstrates constructive ways for all in the education community to move forward beyond the old and tired ‘reading wars’.

# Beyond the ‘Reading Wars’

A balanced approach to helping children learn to read



## Chapter 1

Contextualises the book’s raison d’être by providing a passionate critique of the report of the National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy. It looks at how we should define literacy in the 21st century, and reminds us that literacy is always a social construction.

## Chapter 2

Tells two moral tales based on research into the history of teaching reading in Australia. It demonstrates that, as a profession, we must build and strengthen our practical knowledge base that allows us to teach children to read rather than teach a method of reading.

## Chapter 3

Endeavours to help teachers understand the recent reincarnation of the ‘reading wars’. It demonstrates that phonics is an important aspect of literacy learning because it supports learning how to write alphabetic scripts, not learning how to read them, and that, while explicitness and systematicity are necessary for the effective teaching of literacy, they are not sufficient.

## Chapter 4

Revisits the principles around learning to read and considers what reading means across different contexts and key learning areas. Familiar concepts such as ‘cueing systems’ and the ‘four roles of the reader’ are explored, along with the importance of using ‘authentic texts’.

## Chapter 5

Shows how to take these concepts and embody them in balanced reading programs in early childhood classrooms. This chapter considers the importance of modelled, guided and independent reading opportunities in every child’s reading journey.

## Chapter 6

Examines literacy teaching of children who are learning English as an additional language. It explores literacy experiences of bilingual children, and suggests key elements that should underpin

our practices, including the importance of culturally inclusive material, the role of a child’s first language, and the need for a range of mediational resources.

## Chapter 7

Focuses on assessment for and of learning to read. It includes a range of diagnostic assessment strategies, while also exploring ways for students to peer- and self-evaluate their skills in English and literacy. It also briefly examines the benefits and shortcomings of current testing regimes.

## Chapter 8

Examines the need for teachers to change their view of what constitutes literacy in today’s world. It draws on the author’s research in primary classrooms to demonstrate how digital cameras and computers can be used to engage students in reading and writing by using information communication technologies.

## Chapter 9

To meet syllabus requirements in the middle years, students need to be able to read a wider range of texts for an ever-increasing variety of purposes. This chapter demonstrates how middle-years students need explicit teaching, guidance and support to increase their repertoire of reading strategies and enable them to deal with the complexities of these texts.

## Chapter 10

Approaches the topic of visual literacy, taking the view that children need to know how to read images, not just look at them. The case study material illustrates how teachers working with picture books and factual texts can encourage children to ‘talk out’ images.

## Chapter 11

Draws on work with teachers and children to demonstrate how drama can help children use their already rich imaginations to read and understand the multiple meanings and perspectives of contemporary children’s literature.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### *Beyond the ‘Reading Wars’*

Edited by Robyn Ewing

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