

When so Many School Children Can't Read, It's Time To Do Something Different

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More than half of Texas third graders cannot read at grade level. Might they do better with an entirely different educational approach?

Typically we teach children to read, beginning in preschool, and take up writing later. But over 100 years ago, physician-educator Maria Montessori came up with a radically different approach to literacy that makes far more sense based on the last 50 years of research. It turns the typical approach to literacy on its head by teaching writing before reading, cursive before print, and silent reading before reading aloud.

With the Montessori approach, properly implemented by well-trained teachers, most children are reading well before they even get to first grade. Preschoolers taught by the Montessori approach learn to read better than those taught with the usual techniques, as indicated by three studies that used random lottery designs and thus ensure equal control groups. What is this approach?

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