Top 10 Reasons to Focus on Primary Reading Instruction

1. **Prevention in the primary grades is the key to closing the reading gap.** According to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report card, the percentage of fourth graders scoring below proficient on the NAEP reading assessment was 45% in 2017, 51% in 2015, 64% in 2013, and 65% in 2011.

2. **Early access with reading has lasting effects on motivation.** Research has shown that when struggling readers have meaningful access to reading instruction, their motivation and self-efficacy for reading improve, leading to sustained gains in reading achievement.

3. **Integrated language arts supports cognitive development.** Integrating language arts instruction into other subjects not only improves reading skills but also enhances the development of other cognitive skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking.

4. **Alignment of decodable text to instructional sequence is paramount.** Teaching children to become fluent and automatic readers requires a systematic and explicit approach, where decodable text is introduced at the right time and with appropriate support.

5. **Systematic, explicit phonics is essential.** Effective phonics instruction includes sufficient practice in decodable texts that allow students to master the foundational skills of reading.

6. **Instructional sequence is paramount.** The right instruction can help students secure their decoding skills with decodable text, leading to improved reading outcomes.

7. **Success in beginning reading is a prerequisite for success in reading in later years.** Students who struggle with reading during the primary grades are at high risk for continued reading difficulties.

8. **Libraries have far-reaching effects on society.** Literacy skills are not only important for individual development but also have significant societal impacts, including crime prevention and tax revenue gains.

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10. **The reading achievement gap in the U.S. is wide and persistent.** Despite various interventions and programs, the reading achievement gap persists, highlighting the need for effective early reading instruction.

References:

- Mathes et al., 2005; Vellutino, et al., 2007; Torgesen, 2002).