How to apply reading research to classroom teaching - with Harriet Janetos

Triple R Teaching Podcast #188

Hello, this is Anna Geiger, author of *Reach All Readers* and creator of The Measured Mom. In today's episode, I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing Harriett Janetos. She has been working as an elementary school reading specialist for the past 13 years and has spent over 35 years in education. She's extremely thoughtful and insightful when it comes to applying what we know from research to classroom teaching.

She's also the author of *From Sound to Summary: Braiding the Reading Rope to Make Words Make Sense*. There is much to love about this book. My favorite are the green lights, red flags, and gray areas where she talks about specific things to teach, things not to teach, and areas where we can feel free to choose to do what makes sense to us because research doesn't speak in that area.

I know you're going to get a lot out of our conversation. Be sure to listen for the link to the show notes at the end because Harriett is generously sharing the PDF of her chart. We cover just a few in this episode, but you'll be able to get a link to all of it. Here we go!

Anna Geiger:

Welcome Harriett!

Harriett Janetos:

Thank you so much, Anna. I'm so honored to be here!

Before you start, I want to add my voice to the many who say that you really do fill a unique space in the literacy podcast world, so thank you.

Anna Geiger:

Well, thank you very much, and I'm really happy that you're here. I've seen your comments in the SPELLTalk listserv, if anyone doesn't know what that is, it's run by SPELL-Links, and it's just people asking questions and a lot of researchers answering. I'm just a lurker. I just watch and learn from other people, but you always have such insightful things to say. I'm really happy that you're here, especially to talk about your book *From Sound to Summary*.

Before we do that, can you talk to us about what brought you to where you are in education now and your experience and everything?

Harriett Janetos:

Sure. I started off as a high school English teacher. I taught English including AP English for eight years. I then took eight years child-rearing leave. During that time I got my master's in writing instruction, and I did volunteer lessons in my children's classrooms, mostly read alouds with some kind of a writing component to it. My younger son's first grade teacher asked me to job share with her. She was nearing retirement, so I did that one day a week, first grade level, and then twice a week. From there I ended up job sharing with another third and fourth grade teacher. She actually fell ill at the beginning of the year

so I ended up teaching the whole class on my own, which was quite an experience. Then the following year I was actually assigned to teach a second grade class.

At that time, I either had to get my multiple subject credential, because they could no longer allow me to teach just with my English credential, or become a reading specialist. Since I did not enjoy teaching math, I decided to get my reading specialist credential. I did and then became a reading specialist for the past 13 years, first working with grades 4-6, and then for the past eight years working with 1st and 2nd grade intervention groups. I have 48 students that I see three times a week, eight groups of six.

Anna Geiger:

Okay. Now based on the things that I've seen you share, you really have a good grasp of the research and you're on top of things. Has that always been true for you?

Harriett Janetos:

What a great question. I've always been interested in getting it right in the classroom. When I was a high school teacher I did lots of research into the best way to teach grammar. It came to be that what Steve Graham recommends, contextualizing it and embedding it, is the way to go.

As a teacher I want to be effective, but I also want to be efficient, so I've always been interested in making sure that what I'm doing makes sense and is right. So yes, I have always been interested. Yeah.

Anna Geiger:

You're in California, which was of course where I believe in the '80s whole language was a big thing. Have you, in your experience, faced pushback for things you've wanted to do or seen balanced literacy taking over? I mean, in your position you have the opportunity to try to correct things, but I know that that can be a problem when Tier 1 is fighting against intervention. Has that been your experience as well?

Harriett Janetos:

When I started my job share that was post National Reading Panel report and No Child Left Behind, so we were all trained through Reading First in phonics instruction and phonemic awareness. Having said that, my reading specialist credential program had a balanced literacy approach, and that was after that. We get the research from the National Reading Panel, and then it doesn't change our institutes of higher learning, and it's very confusing. I'll never forget when we were taught how to do running records with MSV, and I thought to myself, "It will take me forever to analyze!"

Anna Geiger:

Yes. Yeah, it does.

Harriett Janetos:

I thought, surely this can't be right. It's this disconnect where it just didn't feel right.

Now at the same time, I discovered the books of Diane McGuinness and she really was research-based, and I became trained in phonographics. I started to see, "Oh, there is a better way!" When I became a reading specialist, our district adopted LLI for its intervention program, but because I was paid by site funds rather than district funds I didn't have to use it. So I developed my own intervention program.

Anna Geiger:

Okay, interesting. It's interesting when I talk to people that have been teaching for a while. There tend to be different groups of people. There are some people like Jan Hasbrouck who has been in the science of reading world her whole career. There are people like you that kind of heard both, but question balanced literacy. It seemed funny to you. Then there's people like me who just ate it up until we were faced with some things, and for many people that's in the last five years really.

Your book is, I would say, advanced reading. I would say it challenged me in some areas, which was great, and after the different sections, you have wonderful resources where teachers can learn more. I recognized those as being very high quality. It's really an excellent book for someone that really wants to understand the science of reading and how to apply it. Can you talk to us a little bit about the structure of the book and why you wrote it?

Harriett Janetos:

It's interesting to hear you say it's an advanced book because ironically and paradoxically, I wanted it to be a book that showed that you can make some very simple changes in your classroom that would be high reward.

I was inspired first when I learned about orthographic mapping eight years ago, and then when I read the book *Brain Words* by Jean Ouellette and Richard Gentry, because that book showed me how to be efficient, how to integrate phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, and reading and writing together.

I realized that the same techniques that I was applying to teach my first and second graders their phonics patterns and to blend and segment words, I could use those same techniques to teach my upper elementary students new vocabulary words. It just became very efficient. I wrote the book because I wanted to share that primarily.

It's sort of autobiographical where this is what I do, this is what has worked for me. Something similar might work for you or you could tweak it, you could add it, you could change it.

Anyway, it was a compulsion to reveal what I had learned and how it really helped transform my teaching.

Anna Geiger:

Something we've talked about that I really love about your book is the green lights, red flags, and gray areas. They are very useful for anyone, beginner or advanced teacher, because you talk about specific things that we should be doing, practices we should have, practices we should avoid, and things where research hasn't really spoken on this. Try it out, see if it works, which is what I would say the gray areas are. That is hard. I don't think we often find charts laid out like that so clearly.

We're going to walk through some of those recommendations today so teachers can really understand specifically what it looks like to follow the research in your teaching. Then of course, I recommend the book for lots more information about these different areas.

Let's move on to talking about spelling. You said this was a red flag to avoid. The red flag to avoid would be an insistence on spelling accuracy beyond phonics patterns and words taught, rather than phonetically plausible attempts. In other words, we don't want to insist they spell words correctly that we haven't explicitly taught them. Can you talk more about that?

Harriett Janetos:

Okay. This is again something I think a lot about in the reality of having twenty seven kindergartners all writing independently at the same time with me rotating around the classroom and circulating. What is

the reality for how correct I can insist that their writing be? Now, having said that, if I'm doing dictation and I'm dictating a sentence, I'm going to ask them to make an attempt first, but then we're going to work on correctness. I think both are important. I am completely convinced by the work of Ouellette and Senechal that giving kids opportunities to do invented spelling, or I recently heard it called estimated spelling, based on phonetic possibilities is a way to promote phonemic awareness. Again, it's this whole idea of integration.

Anna Geiger:

I think when people hear invented spelling, it's maybe an unfortunate name. I use it because that's just what I'm used to, but I understand why. I'm just so used to it, I don't think about it anymore, but I agree that it's probably time for an upgrade. They hear that and it sounds like, well, we're just letting kids do whatever they want. We're not helping them fix it. I think you just have to spend a little bit of time in a kindergarten or first grade classroom to realize that telling this little child how to spell motorcycle is not accomplishing much. They're just writing the letters you say.

Harriett Janetos:

Right.

Anna Geiger:

Could there be an advanced speller or someone who could learn from that? Yes. That's why we need to use our teaching judgment if we actually provide a harder spelling. But I think people are afraid this is going to go on forever.

I think about my younger daughter, she's in fourth grade. She does very well in school, but I would say she doesn't have a strong memory for spellings. She does misspell common words here and there. I was looking at her homework and she had misspelled excited. She forgot the C. Then she spelled congratulations the way many adults do with a D at the beginning instead of that T for congrats. I just wrote them down and then I said, "Hey, let's look at these words." I showed her that she'd actually written exited, so we added the letter. Then for congratulations, I said, "Can you think of another word for that?"

She said, "Congrats."

I said, "Well, that's how you can remember. Congrats has a T in it, so congratulations also has a T."

But that's just the power of teaching, the art of teaching, figuring out when it makes sense.

Harriett Janetos:

So here's my question for you. Ten years ago when I taught kindergarten, I was elated when one of my students wrote the word mayk, M-A-Y-K, because she knew the word play. Another one wrote caym, C-A-Y-M, because he knew the word came, and another student wrote the word enee, E-N-E-E because he knew the word see. Those were those common words that we wrote and talked about all the time. So my question for you is, should I have shown them? We did not spend any time on silent E, certainly not on the irregular spelling of any, A-N-Y. But let's take silent E, should I have shown those kindergartners at that stage of their development, or is that cognitive overload? Do they need to know that it's actually M-A-K-E when we haven't even talked about it?

Anna Geiger:

Yeah, that is a really good question. I was talking to Leslie Laud recently about think SRSD and she talked about having... I forget, she had a name for it, something I hadn't heard before, but it was something like a close copy or something of high-frequency words that we want them to remember to spell correctly.

Harriett Janetos:

Yes. Yes.

Anna Geiger:

So maybe, I mean, obviously in kindergarten we're going to teach them to spell the. We don't want it to be T-H-U even though that's what it sounds like. So is there a place for those other words on those charts? I mean, I agree with you that the fact that they were realizing that something had to be different with those spellings because they were not short vowels is great, and that they had figured out that E-E can spell E, and they'd put it in there. That's the first step. I think probably, I would probably say that is such a wonderful idea. There's another way we can spell E at the end of a word and it's with a Y. But I think it really depends on the kid, don't you think?

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah, that's true too. After I taught that class, I observed another teacher and her writing paper had high frequency words at the bottom of each page.

Anna Geiger:

Oh, that's a neat idea.

Harriett Janetos:

So the kids had an immediate reference to the, was, and probably came.

Anna Geiger:

Yes. I think was was one of the words that I talked about.

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah. So that's a great idea.

Anna Geiger:

Because you don't want them to over practice these words incorrectly. Since they're high frequency, they're going to be using them all the time.

Harriett Janetos:

That's true. Yeah. Yeah.

Anna Geiger:

Okay, so moving on, you wrote something to avoid. "A red flag is 'silent phonics lessons'," you put that in quotes, "such as independent word sorts, filling in worksheets, cutting and pasting activities, and games where students are not demonstrating an integration of phonology with orthography." Can you explain that some more?

Harriett Janetos:

Sure. Without naming a program, I observed lessons where the way this program works is you give a spelling inventory and you determine the stage. The stage that the student-

Anna Geiger:

Developmental stage.

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah, the developmental stage that the student is at, and there are words that go with each stage. You group the kids, you run off the words for each of these groups, and then while you are working with one group, they're cutting out these words and sorting them into patterns. Let's say they're working with AI and AY, well, they can see that AY goes here and AI goes there. They spend all that time cutting, they spend all that time gluing it into their notebooks, and there isn't a lot of reading going on. That's a silent phonics activity.

When I talked to teachers and I said, "You don't have to do this because I don't think it's efficient. You need to find a more effective way." They were so relieved because they thought this program was the gold standard, that they were differentiating. Anyway, that's my best example of what I mean by a silent phonics activity.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah. Well, you basically described the way I used to teach phonics. This may or may not be the program, and that's fine. I don't mind saying programs on my podcast, but I used Words Their Way.

Harriett Janetos:

Yes, that's what it was. Yes.

Anna Geiger:

Yes. It's funny because I had this very conversation with Devin Kearns because I think he and I are about the same age. We did the exact same thing where we had kids copy the words, cut out the words, which took forever, and then glue them into their notebooks. I thought I was differentiating. I actually gave a workshop at a teacher's conference about how to do this because I believed in it so strongly.

It's not that I didn't... When I met with them individually, I knew it was important for them to actually read the words out loud, but there was not much explicit instruction there. It was very much, "You figure this out. How do you notice that the words are different? Let's put them in here." I thought that just sorting them multiple times a week was enough to teach phonics. There's way more to teaching phonics than just sorting a handful of words.

Harriett Janetos:

Of course.

Anna Geiger:

What would you say are better activities for practicing phonics?

Harriett Janetos:

Okay, for the first grade level, and again, I've got this sequence in the book, I begin with a dictation and word chains. I look at the spelling pattern.

I just went into a first grade class and they're doing, /ă/, spelled with a letter A in the book *Pals Help*. I sequence the words that are going to be in the book as a word chain. They're all listed in the back. If they're not in a word chain, I just quickly do that and I might add a word or two if necessary. I'm dictating the words that they're going to be working with, with the spelling pattern, where they're only changing one phoneme at a time, pal to pat, pat to mat, et cetera.

After the dictation of the words, we look in the back of the book and we read the words together. Then I have them label the pictures in the book, and I actually got this technique many years ago from an EL specialist who recommended it as a way to help English learners learn new vocabulary. I realized it also helps first graders not just learn new vocabulary, but experience writing words with spelling patterns that aren't going to be in the text. Words that they may not have learned, but are common.

For example, you're usually going to find a boy and a girl somewhere in the story, so oftentimes we will write /b/-/oy/, boy. I give them a colored pen so it shows out nicely on the blackline master. More importantly, we're labeling, and it's only between one to three words on a picture, but we're labeling the target sound. We're writing cap, we're writing mat, but I'm also throwing in other things.

So we do the dictation, we do the labeling, and then we go back. For the first reading, I give them a highlighter and I say, "I'm going to read the words that don't have the target sound, that don't have /ă/. When I stop, you are reading it and you're highlighting it."

Anna Geiger:

So they just follow along and then read those words.

Harriett Janetos:

Yes, they're following along. I've got it on the document camera. They've got their booklet, I've got it, and we're doing it together, but I'm waiting for them to read the word. They highlight their copy, I highlight mine. Then we go back and we just read the highlighted words.

Then we're ready for the multiple readings. We read as a group, a whole class. They read as a group, they read with their partner, they read independently. They work with it.

When we've exhausted the possibilities for this story and we're ready to go onto the next one, then it goes home to read to somebody at home

I really need to say this, to *Brain Words*, I'm dictating. I say the word mat, they hear it, they repeat the word. They've got three lines on their whiteboard. They say the sound as they write each sound. This is not silent. They've heard me, they've said the word. They're saying each sound, and then when they read the word... It's hear it, say it, write it, read it. They underline the three lines on their whiteboard, they join them, and they use continuous blending, that's the opposite of silent.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah. Thanks for laying that out. I think people learning about the science of reading now are familiar with most of those activities, but I remember just doing phonics workbooks in school, so I don't think we were doing any of that back in the '80s. It's good to think about how to make it more meaningful.

Okay, in the book you said don't teach unsystematic, you called it opportunistic, phonics patterns that do not follow a sequence, but happen to occur during a read-aloud or guided reading of a leveled text and are therefore less likely to transfer to long-term memory due to insufficient practice. But you did

say, "A gray area would be teachability moments whereby incidentally a student's question during a read-aloud, or about a phonics pattern discovered in a book, receives brief attention to promote exposure to an experience with a variety of phonics patterns." In other words, you're talking about when to teach something that's out of your scope and sequence. Can you explain more about how to differentiate between those two situations?

Harriett Janetos:

Great question, and it's one that I've been thinking a lot about, the difference between opportunistic and teachability moments. You know the brilliant Lyn Stone. She was on a podcast recently and was asked about which morpheme she would teach first. She said, "I don't teach ing, because that has a grammatical complexity that I wouldn't want to teach kindergartners." I believe she teaches un and re. Does that sound right to you?

Anna Geiger:

Yep, I've read that. I've heard that too.

Harriett Janetos:

Okay, so I thought to myself, "Hmm, I definitely want to be as simple and un-complex as possible." But I remember vividly when my kindergartner, because little kids are writing about playing and kicking and jumping a lot, asked me about that and I thought, "Oh, wait. If they're going to be using this in their writing, it's not in the scope and sequence, it's not part of any of their decodables, it's not anywhere in the kindergarten curriculum, but I'm going to show them ing. I'm not going to explain anything. I'm not going to tell them what part of speech it is." Is it the present participle? I can't even remember, what it is now. Is that what it is?

Anna Geiger:

I'm not 100% sure myself. I think that's right.

Harriett Janetos:

Okay, yeah. "I'm just going to show them NG, two letters, one sound." Now that's terminology I've already used. We've talked about the double E in see. We've talked about AY in play. Their scope and sequence at the time, and I'm not sure if it's changed with the new adoption, but at the time, what they were using was very simple, mostly CVC. I think maybe getting into silent E at the end of kindergarten, I'm not even sure. It was very simple.

So it's not part of the scope and sequence, but I think that's a good example of a teachability moment. If they're going to use it, I'm going to share that with them, and I think it's high utility.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah, so it's a difference between what I call embedded phonics, where your phonics instruction is only as it comes up or when you think this would be a good time to teach it, versus they're interested so let's talk about this right now. Even though I don't expect mastery of this, and I'm not going to assess them on it, we're going to go ahead and talk about it.

Harriett Janetos:

Now that's important. Yeah, you definitely don't expect mastery.

Anna Geiger:

Another thing you talked about, which I think would be pretty controversial within the science of reading community of teachers, maybe not researchers, but people that are working on applying the science of reading. Here was a red flag you said not to do. "Decodable text that relies extensively on phonics patterns taught, especially once the basic code of CVC words has been covered."

I think that many people creating decodable texts pride themselves on a text being 100% decodable. You would say we don't want to over-rely on that. Correct?

Harriett Janetos:

Without having it be cognitive overload. I want them to be exposed to real life mixtures of words. I am now on the side where it's okay, as long as we're supporting them and scaffolding the experience, and not having them be frustrated trying to read these books independently. That's where I'm at. It seems to me it's an evolving issue.

Anna Geiger:

I think what we want, many of us would like to see research tell us that kids should be reading 100% decodable provided you've taught the irregular high frequency words that we might not call decodable.

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah, that's a very good point.

Anna Geiger:

Then we might say, I wish research would tell me that kids need this until they've mastered these exact phonics patterns. But there is nothing like that. We do know that research says typically kids will use what you've taught them. If you teach them to sound out words and their practice material matches that, then they will sound out words. If you try to teach them phonics, but then the practice material is predictable leveled books, they're not going to apply that skill, right?

Harriett Janetos:

Exactly.

Anna Geiger:

Tim Shanahan talks about this too. There isn't really research that says that this is the only beginning reader material we should have. But then that gets very confusing because we know that the material that some of us had our students use was bad, that predictable text for the beginners, because we were teaching them false ideas about what reading is, and then we were teaching guessing. But then we're confused. So if we're supposed to get them into more authentic text early on, what does that even look like and how do they read those words that we haven't necessarily taught to them? I know there's the self-teaching hypothesis, but doesn't that kick in differently for different kids at different times?

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah, and I think I would say early on we don't want to use predictable text, and we want it to be highly decodable at the very early stages. The decodable books that I'm given in the series I have worked with, I've worked with Houghton Mifflin, I've worked with the Treasure Series, and now with the Benchmark

Series... Early on the basic text for kindergartners is highly decodable, and they'll use a rebus, they'll use a picture if they want to.

Anna Geiger:

For those harder words.

Harriett Janetos:

For the harder words. Sometimes they don't even put the word, they just put the picture.

Anna Geiger:

How do you feel about that? That's fine?

Harriett Janetos:

I think it's great. Do you know anything about that research-wise? I think that's a great idea.

Anna Geiger:

Some people don't like it, some teachers.

Harriett Janetos:

Oh, tell me why.

Anna Geiger:

I don't know if any researchers have said anything about that. I don't have any resources at this point that include rebuses, but I think I had shared about it and someone said, "Oh, no! Rebuses are not supported by the science of reading."

I'm like, "Okay, can you send me a study because I don't think there's anything like that."

Harriett Janetos:

Okay, I'm thinking of a kindergarten story about making stew in a pot. There are lots of basic words, lots of CVC words, but then they have pictures of carrots and beans-

Anna Geiger:

Yeah, I don't have a problem with that.

Harriett Janetos:

... and potatoes.

Anna Geiger:

No, it doesn't bother me at all. I think they're worried that you're teaching kids to rely on the picture to read, but I think that's just a very different situation. I feel like I saw something about that somewhere, but I can't remember what it was.

Harriett Janetos:

And in case there's any doubt, we don't want to use predictable books at beginning levels because I spend my time in intervention teaching-

Anna Geiger:

Undoing it.

Harriett Janetos:

Undoing it! Teaching kids not to desperately look at the pictures.

Anna Geiger:

Well, before we move on to the next one, I want to go back just real quick. You talked about providing support as they read multi-criterion text. This is such a big question that I think I'm wrestling with and many teachers are wrestling with. I'll write nonfiction decodable passages and I will include some "story words" because I can't teach about this information without using a word that they maybe haven't learned the phonics skills for. I'll say at the beginning of the passage, these are some words you might want to pre-teach.

Do you have any other tips for supporting students with these texts that include words that may not be explicitly taught previously?

Harriett Janetos:

In addition to making sure that we're always reviewing those high frequency words, I would include some of the problematic words in the labeling so that they're working with it. We are sounding it out together. We are writing it. "Oh, look at the fox, he is helping hen. There they are. Let's write help, /h/ /ĕ/ /l/ /p/."

It's a conundrum. Yes, you ask a great question. I think it is the way to go. I think without burdening the students we want to expand as much as we can. But then too, back to Tim Shanahan, it's nice to just have some basic decodable ones. It is nice to have the range.

Anna Geiger:

I mean, initially for sure, like beginning of kindergarten, let's keep it as basic as we can, but at some point when they start to figure out how to decode words and they've mapped words, and it's not such a struggle just to get a word off the page, start to not be afraid of words that haven't been explicitly taught, but also don't just drop them in the deep end without support.

Harriett Janetos:

Exactly. Oh, never. Right.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah, and I wrote about this in my book. I listed different experts on how much of the code they should have before moving out of decodable books, and everybody has got a different idea. I don't think we have an answer on this one yet, I guess is my conclusion.

Harriett Janetos:

Yeah.

Anna Geiger:

You talked about, and this is something that many people are familiar with now, people who learn about the science of reading and what that means for the classroom, that we want to avoid memorization of high frequency words without doing phonemic analysis and reinforcing which parts are decodable. Do you have a procedure that you use for teaching what we call irregular high frequency words?

Harriett Janetos:

In my small group, I don't have the luxury to spend a lot of time. I know the teachers are spending time on the high frequency words, but as they come up, my kids know when I write on the board if I'm writing in red, it means two or more letters are representing one sound. So if a student is struggling on, let's say the word where, I would put WH in red, E in blue, and RE in red, and then I would underline WH-E-RE. I think having a set of cards or having it somewhere in the room where it is phonemically analyzed is helpful.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah, so just understanding that we're not memorizing the whole shape of the word, but we're looking at how each sound is spelled, which is really how we're teaching reading always.

Harriett Janetos:

Well, that's what I was going to say. Yes, how each sound is spelled.

Anna Geiger:

But so often we were taught that these are just words we have to memorize. Just as a reminder! But we are pretty familiar with that nowadays that that's a practice to avoid.

I think another interesting one, because I think there are different groups that would maybe disagree, but I agree, where you said to avoid morphemes before students can read CVC words. Morphemes are those meaningful parts of words like a prefix or a suffix. But there may be, and I don't know a whole lot about it, but I know there is a group that kind of promotes basically not really starting with phonics, but starting with word parts.

Harriett Janetos:

Yes.

Anna Geiger:

Can you talk more about your red flag?

Harriett Janetos:

Okay. So first of all, you teach them how to segment and blend with phonics, and then you teach them what the plural looks like. Oh, they're putting a Z at the end. I know it sounds like /z/, like in the word was, it sounds like /z/, but this is how we spell it. I think they're onto something, but I think it's cognitive overload. I know that in "Ending the Reading Wars" which is the basic research that I begin each chapter with, they lay that out.

Anna Geiger:

Yeah. Castles, Rastle, and Nation.

Just last night... I don't know when this episode is going to come out in what order, so it's possible this episode won't be out yet, but I just interviewed Fiona Hamilton from wordtorque. She's actually in China right now, but she's from Australia. She talks a lot about morphology and I really enjoy learning from her. I'll have to link this into show notes, but she has a workshop, I think it's called "Phonics and Morphology: A Love Story." She talks about how you do need to teach phonics first, but we can build in morphology early on.

I think that would agree with what you're saying, that the tricky part is they overlap or where morphology takes over with the spelling. Untying all that for kids can be tricky, and for us figuring out the order and integration is hard.

We're going to talk about one more, and this would be perhaps contradictory to what some Orton-Gillingham-based programs would say. You said, "Don't teach syllabication only through analysis of syllable types or phonics rules."

I was trained in Orton-Gillingham, and it was very much a focus on syllable types and syllable division rules, VC/CV and all of that. You don't say necessarily not to do that, but you say not to only do that. Can you talk more about your strategy for teaching kids to read longer words with multiple syllables?

Harriett Janetos:

The more I read about this the more I realize, and Devin Kearns did an excellent article in “The Reading Teacher” and Linnea Ehri also did some research, I believe 10 years ago, which showed not that teaching syllable types wasn't effective, but that you could use other strategies that can do it in less time. My principle is always effectiveness, it has to be effective. We have to choose effective methods, but also efficiency and simplicity.

The way I do it is I teach kids to locate the vowels in a multisyllabic word as a first step. Then the hard part with that is, are the vowels separate or are they together? Is there an AI together? Is there an EA together? When we practice this, I will dictate to them, and I will tell them how many syllables are in a word. I will tell them.

We'll start off in the teaching process and I'll tell them, "Okay, this word has this many syllables." And I'll say, "Remember, every syllable has to have a vowel." They will try the phonemic analysis, hear it, say it, write it, read it, and then we will discuss it.

Now when they're reading a word on their own and they're having trouble reading the word, they've got their whiteboards, I have them write the word, write the first chunk that has a vowel, and then go on to the next chunk that has a vowel, et cetera. Then they attempt to sound it out, and this is where flexible pronunciations come in.

Also too, at the end of the year with my second graders, they were recognizing T-I-O-N at the end. They were recognizing TION, and that's one of the other recommendations. Look for morphemes.

Anna Geiger:

Peeling off.

Harriett Janetos:

Peeling off. Yeah, the whole peeling off.

Anna Geiger:

I like that one. That's the one I recommend nowadays, which is where, if you have a long word you look for affixes that have been taught that kids recognize they can pull them off or at least try see if they're an affix, and then whatever's left, you dot the vowels, try to break it into syllables and then use a flexible pronunciation to see if it matches something in your oral language. Which goes all the way back to why it's so important we're reading aloud to kids and talking, because if they don't have the word in their oral language, they may not be able to read it.

Harriett Janetos:

Of course, yes.

Anna Geiger:

Well, thank you so much. We talked about a lot, but there's so much more in your book and lots of just wonderful things to dig into. Is there anything else you want to share before we end today?

Harriett Janetos:

Yes. I want to say that two days ago I finished your book.

Anna Geiger:

Oh, thank you.

Harriett Janetos:

What you accomplished with *Reach All Readers* is something that's not in my nature. You are comprehensive. You cover everything in a very teacher-friendly way. This is why my fallback was to rely on the research from "Ending the Reading Wars." I was thinking, "They've already done it! I'm just going to have them say it and then I'm going to show how I did it in the classroom." But you broke it down for teachers at every level. You have all the terminology that we need, you have all the practices that we need, and I think it's an incredible accomplishment.

Anna Geiger:

Well thank you so much! That's very nice of you to say.

Harriett Janetos:

I hope our books fill different spaces and complement each other, but definitely I want to say I really appreciated that.

Anna Geiger:

Well, thank you so much. I appreciate your work too, because like I said, it did give me a lot of things to think about. I really like all the references you made to other places to learn more because there is so much to sort through, and you've done that yourself, which is very clear in all the communication that you have. You do your work.

Thank you so much, again, Harriett. It was really nice to meet you and to talk about your book and your work.

Harriett Janetos:

Thank you!

Anna Geiger:

You can find the show notes for today's episode at themeasuredmom.com/episode188.

Closing:

That's all for this episode of Triple R Teaching. For more educational resources, visit Anna at her home base, themeasuredmom.com and join our teaching community. We look forward to helping you reflect, refine, and recharge on the next episode of Triple R Teaching.