

JOKER PURGED FROM READING STANDARDS

Exorcising the devil in the details

In dysfunctional look-and-guess, "whole language," anti-phonics "Reading," *sight words* are words students memorize and supposedly "read" without knowing all their letter-sound correspondences.

This wrongly reverses Bloom's taxonomy, which says students should master simple skills before attempting more complex tasks. And it voids this rule's pro-phonics application, that students should learn all letter-sound correspondences in phonetically-regular words before reading them.

The tainted term *sight words* is now passé. Yet the abuse lingers, rebadged as *high-frequency words*, which include phonetically-regular words taught as sight words that students "read" before they know all their letter-sound correspondences. **Deletions** and **insertions** below show how Texas educrats **PROPOSED CALLING SUCH UNDECODABLE WORDS DECODABLE** in Texas' new 1st grade Reading standards, but Texas' State Board of Education (SBOE) **RESTORED THE TRUE PHONICS DEFINITION OF DECODABILITY**.

Decodable words are those words within a passage that contain letter/sound correspondences that have been taught. In addition, ~~high-frequency words that appear on the Eeds (1985) list of high-frequency words and~~ phonetically-irregular words that have been specifically taught in any previous lessons are considered decodable. Non-decodable words, on the other hand, include ~~words not on the list of high-frequency words,~~ phonetically-regular words for which the sounds for every letter or letter combination or the syllabication rules have not been taught, ... and phonetically-irregular words not previously taught.

Teaching phonetically-regular words on "high-frequency word lists" as sight words does not make them decodable. Previously teaching all their letter-sound correspondences does. Texas 1st grade Reading programs can teach any number

of still-undecodable phonetically-regular words as sight words. They just cannot count toward Texas' 80% minimum average decodability requirement. But for **SBOE mastery of detail, anti-phonics moles would have voided Texas' pro-phonics intent in 1st grade Reading.**

Texas' SBOE found that:

- "High-frequency word lists" INCLUDE PHONETICALLY-REGULAR WORDS.
- Teaching them as sight words DOES NOT MAKE THEM DECODABLE.
- Pretending that it does, ARTIFICIALLY INFLATES DECODABILITY SCORES.

Mastery of detail is power