*Research readings*

*1-2 page response identifying the point of view, the findings and the conclusions of the readings from the research handbook.*

1. **Researching the Teaching of Reading through Direct Observation**

Tools, methodologies, and Guidelines for the Future

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The article begins by establishing early trends of the use of direct observation (classroom observation) in the art of teaching. The authors cite Joseph Mayor Rice (1893) as the father of research in teaching with establishing early goals to determine the success of teaching strategies. Rice drew ire of education system of his time (1897) by blaming education of teachers with poor results achieve by their students, as opposed to blaming the student for his/ her own low success. However, it was another 75 years before real observations of teaching actually moved into the classroom.

The authors describe the tools and methodologies used to observe teaching of reading in classrooms by looking at them conceptually, historically, and then noting the present and offering suggestions for the future. Initially, data was collected in a more quantitative manner. Logs of time spent on tasks, students in self-directed activities, teachers lecturing, teachers interacting, etc., were recorded and analyzed. Later, tools and methods were developed that provided more qualitative data but the authors contend that progress in the development of these tools were necessary in order to look at teaching in this way.

As tools continue to develop, so does the usefulness of the tool. For example, Newman (1999) used photos to document print in classrooms- location- and recorded changes based on amount of material and placement. This type of tools did not exist in the past and therefore could not have been used. The evolution of the instrument progresses from: what counts? For whom? Under what conditions? For what purposes and intention? Just because a measurement tool has been developed and can be administered does not mean that the data collected will be useful in terms of helping teachers teach better or ultimately raise the level of achievement of students.

5 guidelines for observational research are suggested: tool selection, tool description, tool use, tool products (secondary artifacts) and tool evaluation. These guidelines are important for researchers, editors, teachers and all involved with observational research. Ultimately, the authors conclude that observational research is expensive but necessary in order to determine what works and what does not work. Policy makers must not make sweeping changes without this type of solid background and understanding. The authors provide a historical foundation to make a point of how these best practices should be used today.