

## The Foundations of Literacy Learning in Primary Classrooms:

Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

Monday, April 24th

10:30 – 3:00 pm

Presenter:  
Dr. Jen Kelly

## Outcomes for Today



- ★ definitions and scope and sequence for foundational literacy skills:
  - phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics
- ★ mini-lessons, activities, and routines to:
  - explicitly and systematically support our students as they learn letter/sound relationships in reading and writing
  - provide students with the time, opportunity, and practice to make meaning in and out of texts and expand their word solving skills

## How did you learn to...



ride a bike?



swim?



drive a car?

Please choose ONE activity and take ONE minute to reflect individually  
– take some notes on how you learned to do it.

Please share your thoughts with someone else in the room

## HOW do we learn?



- \* observation of someone skilled modelling/demonstrating
- \* direct instruction
- \* gradual release of responsibility
- \* practice / repetition
- \* time / opportunity
- \* encouragement / feedback
- \* safety to take risks and try new things
- \* relationships, motivation, engagement...

Learning is:

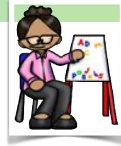
- \* social
- \* constructive
- \* experiential
- \* inquiry-based

With this in mind, how can we provide our students with the comprehensive learning experiences needed to build their foundational literacy skills?



## Phonemic Awareness & Phonics

These work in concert to **explicitly** and **systematically** support our students as they navigate the unpredictable, complex alphabetic structure of language & print.



### Phonemic Awareness

- main focus is on **sounds**
- deals with **spoken language**
- lessons are **oral** and **auditory**
- students work with **manipulating sounds in words**
- there are **44 sounds** in the English language

### Phonics

- main focus is on **letters** and their **sounds**  
*there are 26 letters that make 44 sounds*
- deals with **written language** and **print**
- lessons are both **visual** and **auditory**
- students work with **reading and writing letters**  
*according to their sounds, spelling patterns, and phonological structure*
- there are **over 200 ways** to **spell** the 44 sounds we hear

Phonemic awareness **instruction** improves phonics **skills**, and phonics **instruction** improves phonemic awareness; the relationship is **reciprocal**.

—Lane & Pullen, 2004

## Readiness Skills

The two best predictors of early reading success are **phonemic awareness** and **alphabet recognition**.



### Phonemic Awareness

A range of subskills is taught to develop phonemic awareness, with oral blending and oral segmentation having the **most positive impact** on reading and writing development.

★ These skills are **power skills**.

### Alphabet Recognition

Involves learning the **names, shapes, and sounds** of the **letters** of the alphabet with **fluency**.

Phonemic awareness and alphabet recognition are focused on primarily in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

## Scope and Sequence of Phonemic Awareness

...the understanding that **spoken words** are made up of **individual sounds**

### Examples of Phonemic Awareness Skills

Taught and learned in the order of **easiest to most difficult**...



1. **Sound and word discrimination:**  
*What word doesn't belong with the others? cat, mat, bat, ran*
2. **Rhyming:** *What word rhymes with 'cat'? bat*
3. **Syllable splitting:** *The onset of 'cat' is /k/, the rime is /at/*
4. **Blending:** *What word is made up of the sounds /k/ /a/ /t/? cat*
5. **Phonemic segmentation:** *What are the sounds in 'cat'? /k/ /a/ /t/*
6. **Phoneme deletion:** *What is 'cat' without the /k/? at*
7. **Phoneme manipulation:** *What word would you have if you changed the /t/ in 'cat' to an /n/? can*

## Rhyme Recognition & Repetition

### One minute direct instruction lesson

#### Rhyme Repetition

T says word pair,  
Students repeat:

hop/mop ran/fan  
wet/jet mad/dad

#### Examples:

go/no  
yes/me  
sad/mad  
out/pig  
run/fun  
in/lap  
rip/bag

#### Role of the Educator

- educator says the word pairs

#### Role of the Students

- Students repeat the word pairs and show thumbs up if the words rhyme, thumbs down if the words don't rhyme.



## Explicit Instruction Both In and Out of Texts

### Making Meaning OUT OF Texts

#### Word Study

Early Literacy Concepts  
Phonological Awareness  
Letter-Sound Relationships  
Letter Knowledge  
Spelling Patterns  
High-Frequency Words  
Word Meaning/Vocabulary  
Word Structure  
Word Solving Actions

### Making Meaning IN Texts

#### Reading

Active Read Aloud  
Reading Mini-Lessons  
Shared Reading  
Guided/Small-Group Reading  
Independent Reading

#### Writing

Modelled Writing  
Writing Mini-Lessons  
Shared/Interactive Writing  
Guided/Small-Group Writing  
Independent Writing

← Oral Language →

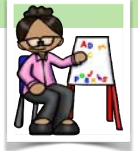
Adapted from – The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell

## The Art of the Mini-Lesson

### Mini-Lesson Structure



- \* mini, not maxi
- \* strategy-focused
- \* model, model, model
- \* direct and explicit instruction
- \* guided practice in a safe, supportive setting
- \* transfer to independence



Write from the Start: Writing Workshop in K-3 – POPEY Presentation by Lori Jamison

## Modelling a Mini-Lesson on Alliteration

- \* mini, not maxi
- \* strategy-focused
- \* model, model, model
- \* direct and explicit instruction

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers

- \* guided practice in a safe, supportive setting

Goofy Garrett grazes on gigantic green grapes.

Silly Simon searches sneakily for slithering snakes.

Tricky Taylor teaches ten timid tigers to twirl.

- \* transfer to independence

make up your own phrase using alliteration

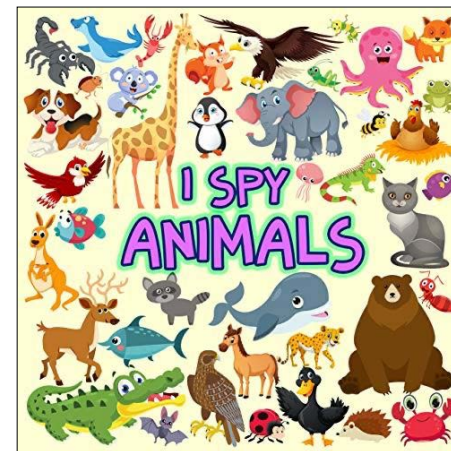
Phonics Activities & Games Kit – Blevins & Sadler School

## Rhyming Activity - OUT of text

## Rhyming I Spy

I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with ...

- mat
- tail
- hear
- grab



- log
- wish
- chair
- wheel

Image From [I Spy Animals](#) – by Nancy Dyer



## Characteristics of Strong Phonics Instruction



- ✓ **Readiness Skills** – phonemic awareness & alphabet recognition
- ✓ **Scope and sequence** – build student learning from simple to complex
- ✓ **Blending** – must be frequently modelled and applied
- ✓ **Dictation** – guided spelling helps transition growing reading skills to writing
- ✓ **Word Awareness Activities**– word sorts and word building provide opportunities to play with words and experiment with how word parts combine
- ✓ **Teaching High-Frequency Words** – teaching high utility words that are irregular based on common sound-spelling patterns (typically the top 200–300 high frequency words are taught in K–2)
- ✓ **Reading Connected Text** – controlled, decodable text at the beginning level of reading instruction helps students develop a sense of comfort in and control over their reading growth – a key learning tool in early phonics instruction

Active \* Social \* Reflective

## Possible Phonics Scope and Sequence

- 1 **Teach short-vowel sounds before long-vowel sounds**
  - efficiency and ease of learning are critical
  - the simplicity of using short-vowel spellings and CVC words is beneficial to struggling readers
- 2 **Teach consonants and short vowels in combination so that words can be generated as early as possible**
  - you can create decodable, connected text so kids can apply their knowledge of learned sound-spelling relationships
- 3 **The majority of consonants taught early on should be continuous consonants**
  - such as f, l, m, n, r, and s – because these consonant sounds can be sustained without distortion, it's easier to model blending
- 4 **Use a sequence in which the most words can be generated**
  - for example, many words can be generated using the letter t; very few using x
  - higher-frequency sound-spelling relationships should precede less-frequent ones
- 5 **Progress from simple to more complex sound-spellings**
  - consonant sounds should be taught before digraphs and blends
  - short-vowel sound-spellings should be taught before long-vowel sound-spellings

## WHY a Scope and Sequence?

Scope and sequence are created so that many words can be formed as early as possible.

How many words can you potentially read and write with the following letters?

\* s, m, t, d, l

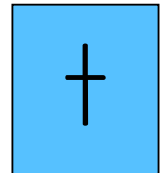
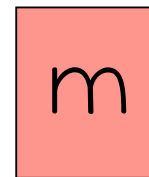
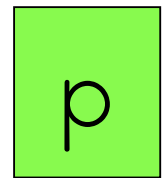
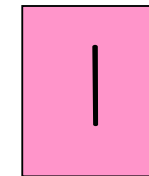
\* s, m, a, t, d



Quick generation of useful words is not only more efficient, but highly motivating!

## Giant Flash Cards

An interactive way to practice blending and focusing on phonics concepts.





## The process of using Elkonin boxes during Writing

- \*Give the student a 'practice page' or white board
  - \*When the student is writing and they come to a word they need to problem solve, model the use of Elkonin boxes on the practice page
- \*Model the task for the student
  - \*Say the word slowly and touch the boxes (or push objects into the boxes) as you say the word
- \*Have the student try it themselves
  - \*You may do the task together until the student can take over



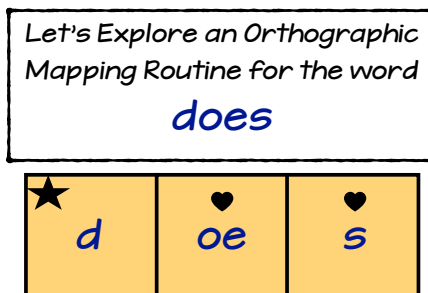
## High Frequency Words

Prioritize which high frequency words you explicitly teach...

	Low Frequency	High Frequency
Regular	quake	went
Irregular	choir	was

## Orthographic Mapping

Orthographic mapping proposes that we use the pronunciations of words that are already stored in long-term memory as the anchoring points for the orthographic sequences (letters) used to represent those pronunciations.



## The Power of Word Families

Teaching word families is high impact instruction

- \* There are 37 word families that can help kids spell about 500 words
- \* The word families help kids make C-V-C words and also teach children a foundational spelling strategy
- \* One known word can help you spell other unknown words:
  - ✓ hop, mop, chop
  - ✓ day, say, play
  - ✓ bat, cat, flat
  - ✓ fin, pin, grin
  - ✓ bit, fit, split
- \* Once writers understand a word family, sometimes they can then begin to recognize that short vowel sound in other words, too.









## More Advanced Language Comprehension

Common Prefixes and Suffixes we can explicitly teach:

Prefix	% of words	Meaning	Examples
un-	26%	not, opposite of	unaware, unsure
re-	14%	again	redo, replay
im-, in-, il-, ir-	11%	not	impossible, illogical

Suffix	% of words	Part of Speech	Examples
-s,-es	31%	plural of noun	cats, boxes
-ed	20%	past tense of verb	sailed
-ing	14%	progressive tense of verb	jumping, racing

Look what knowledge students can gain from these explicit lessons!

## Spelling - Ehri's phases of reading development

Reciprocity – reading and spelling

**Phase 1:**  
pre-  
alphabetic

(not using alphabetic principles)

**Phase 2:**  
partial

(write with consonants-  
initial & final sounds)

**Phase 3:**  
full  
alphabet

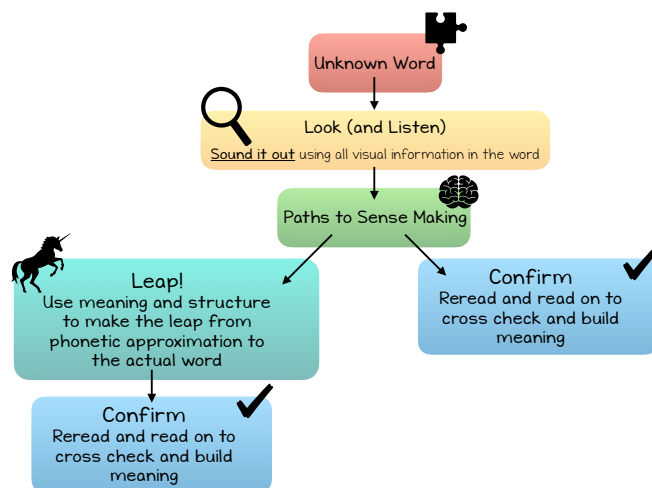
(All the sounds are present, not necessary spelled correctly)

**Phase 4:**  
consolidated  
alphabetic

(Writing multi-syllabic words)

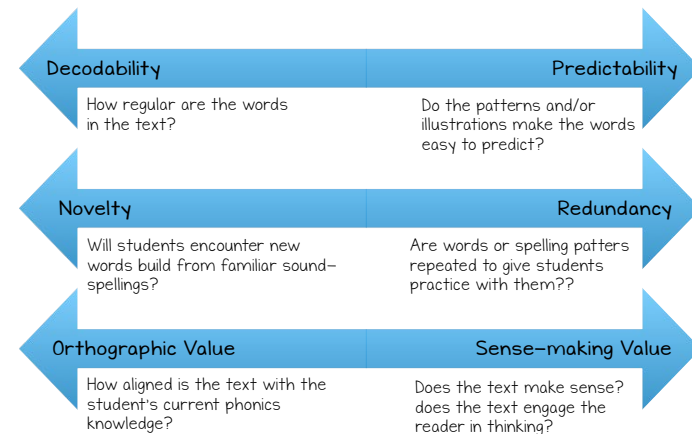
## Path to Problem Solving

Look (and Listen) before you Leap:



## Choosing books

Questions to ask when considering beginning texts:





## Reflections & Next Steps

### Resources, research & activities shared today:

- ✓ Definitions, scope & sequence: phonological & phonemic awareness, phonics
- ✓ How we learn, and the reading brain (visual village, sound city, meaning mountain)
- ✓ Explicit, intentional, and repeated word study in and out of texts
- ✓ Mini-lessons (direct instruction, model, guided practice, transfer to independence)
- ✓ The connection between decoding & comprehension
- ✓ Characteristics of strong phonics instruction
- ✓ Elkonin boxes and orthographic mapping
- ✓ Using students' names, word families, word ladders, word wall I spy
  - ★ differentiated & engaging word solving routines

What is **ONE** thing you can commit to **TRY** in your classroom or role? Share it with your table group.

## Sources

### Resource Books

- A Fresh Look at Phonics, Grade K-2 – Blevins
- Phonics Activities & Games Kit – Blevins & Sadler School
- Phonics From A-Z – Blevins
- Shifting the Balance – Burkins & Yates
- Units of Study in Phonics – Calkins
- Units of Study in Writing – Calkins
- Literacy Lessons Part Two – Clay
- Comprehension Skill, Will & Thrill of Reading – Fisher & Frey
- The Fountas & Pinnell Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study System – Fountas & Pinnell
- When Readers Struggle: Teaching That Works – Fountas & Pinnell
- Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom – Fountas & Pinnell
- Lesley University Institute: Word Study: Teaching Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling in Grades K-3
- Phonemic Awareness: The skills that they need to help them succeed! – Heggerty
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum
- Comprehensive Literacy Resource – Trehearne

## Sources

### Blogposts & Presentations

[Carolyn Strom – Presentation: Refining Professional Knowledge to Build Capacity in Reading Instruction, Learning & the Brain Conference, April 2022](#)

[The Big Five: Phonics-Orthographic Mapping – Wooldridge](#)

[Reading Rockets – Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: Introduction](#)

### Videos

[Worry About Yourself](#)

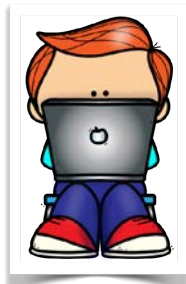
[TED Talk – Birth of a Word](#)

[Balanced Literacy Diet – Park Those Sounds](#)

[Tik Tok Word Reading](#)

[POPEY – Word Ladders](#)

[Balanced Literacy Diet – Word Wall I Spy](#)



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